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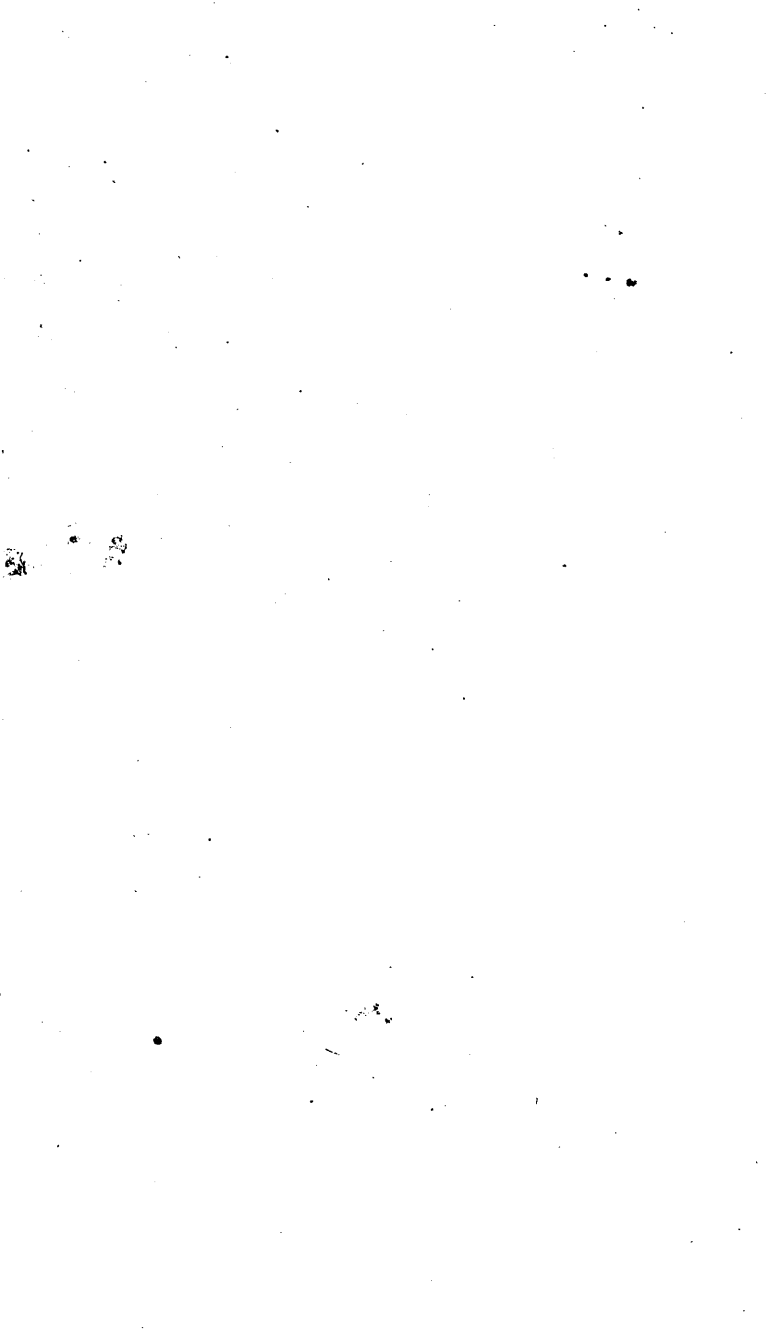
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CONSIDERATIONS
UPON
CHRISTIAN TRUTHS AND DUTIES,
EIGHTED INTO
MEDITATIONS
FOR
EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

BY THE RIGHT REV. DR. RICHARD CHALLONER,
BISHOP OF DEBRA, V. A."

ABRIDGED
BY THE REV. JOHN BELL.

Blessed is the man—whose will is in the law of the Lord; and he shall meditate on his law day and night.
And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season.
And his leaf shall not fall off, and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.—
Psalm i, 1, 2, 3.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

THOSE who are at all acquainted with the writings of Bishop Challoner, need not be told of the excellency of his *MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR*. For more than half a century this has been a standard devotional book among Catholics. The Meditations are marked by a method, a clearness, a solidity, an earnestness, a thoroughness, and withal, by a simplicity and an unction, which cannot fail to commend them to every christian mind and heart. They are indeed an invaluable treasury of moral truths, fully unfolded and strongly enforced. They embrace the entire circle of christian morality, including the most instructive and touching traits in the life, teachings, sufferings, death and resurerection of Jesus Christ.

Whoever will use this work regularly every day cannot but find, at the close of the year, that he has meditated on all that is most instructive and soul-stirring in the christian religion. The subjects are finely adapted to the different seasons of the church, and to the various festivals of the calendar; and they moreover run into each other, so as to constitute a progressive and harmonious development of christian truths.

The chief feature in the present edition is, that it is

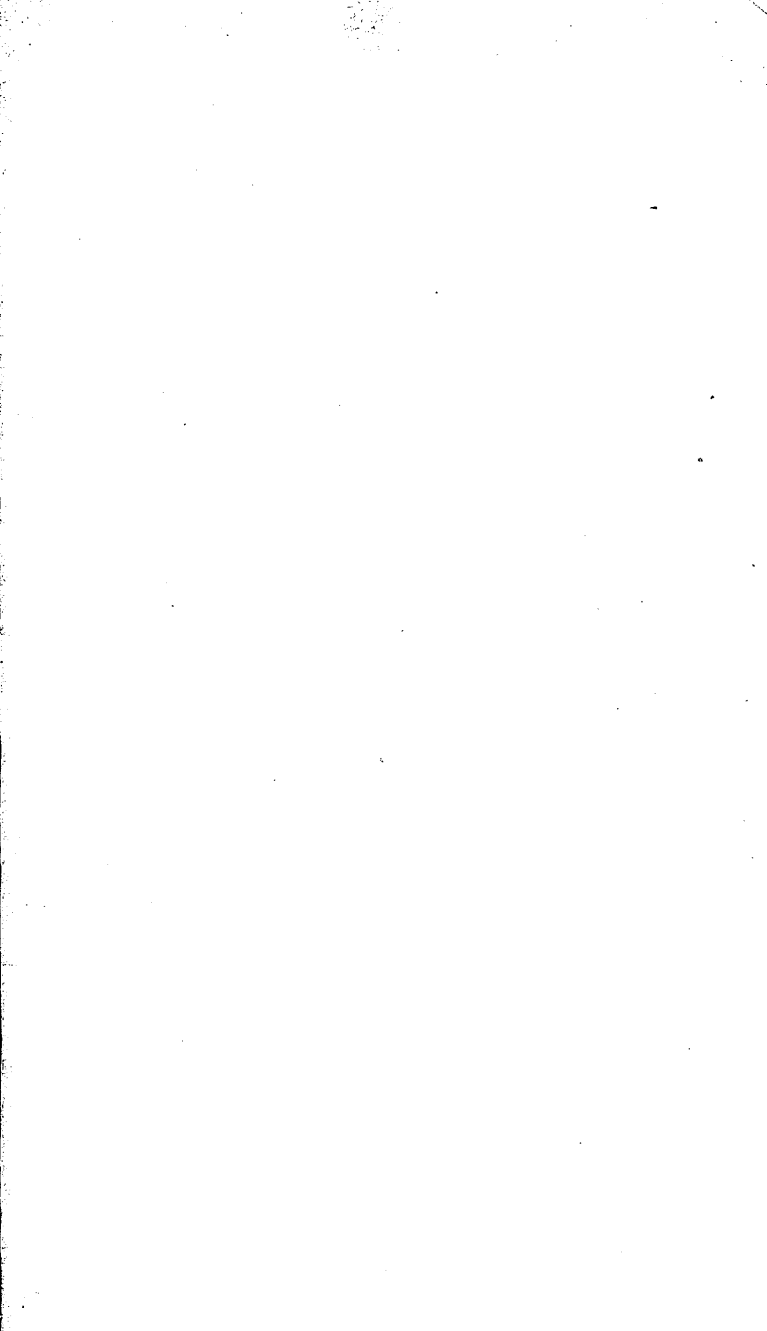
an exact reprint, now made for the first time in the United States, of the Abridgment of Bishop Challoner's *Meditations*, by the Rev. JOHN BELL, of England. The advantages proposed in the republication of this abridgment, are chiefly two-fold: first, the work is thus reduced to a little more than half the size, and may consequently be procured at half the expense of the original edition; and second, the *Meditations*, which many had found too long for ordinary use in the original work, are thus brought down to such a compass as is deemed most suitable to the tastes and wants of the greatest number.

In general, we are opposed to abridgments; because they are often carelessly made, and disfigure the original work without producing any great amount of good. But we firmly believe that the present abridgment of Bishop Challoner's *Meditations* is an exception to this remark. Besides clearly possessing the advantages just indicated, it adorns, instead of mutilating the work itself. While it faithfully gives the entire substance of all the *Meditations*, and in the precise order in which they then stood, it presents a decided improvement in language and style. The long, and sometimes tedious periods and illustrations of Dr. Challoner are here rendered shorter, more varied, and more graceful. And though we do not attach any great importance to the mere style of a book of devotion, and though we even greatly prefer the homely simplicity and unstudied words of some among our older ascetical writers to the flippant graces and empty verbosity of some of a more modern date, yet we cannot but believe that there may be a happy conjunction of true devotion and real pathos

with chaste simplicity and faultless elegance of style; and also, that such a conjunction is highly desirable in the present day.

Such are some of the motives which led to the publication of the present edition. Confident we are, that those who will procure this work and use it daily, will find in it all the advantages we have indicated. Fathers of families should have this book for their own edification, and the instruction of their children. Daily meditation on some great truth of christianity is one of the most effectual means of avoiding vice and practising virtue. Those who do not daily arm themselves with the weapons of prayer and reflection, are like soldiers who enter into battle without armor.

Of one thing we are quite certain: that no book of religious instruction in our language contains, within an equal compass, a greater amount of solid and useful matter than Challoner's *Meditations*, as now presented to the American public. Every one will be readily convinced of this, by obtaining and examining the work for himself. The work, in its present form, is deemed specially adapted to the use of the missionary clergy and of religious communities.



CHALLONER'S MEDITATIONS.

MEDITATIONS

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR

JANUARY 1,

Or, New Year's Day.

CONSIDER, first, that our infant Saviour, being now but eight days old, began already to shed his sacred blood in obedience to his Father's will, and subjected himself on this day to that most painful and most humbling ceremony of circumcision; as if he, like the rest of sinful mortals, had wanted any expiation. No, Christians! He came to discharge the immense debt contracted by our sins to his Father's justice, by shedding the last drop of his blood in expiation for them; and, lo! he has here given us an earnest of the payment, by submitting himself this day to the painful knife of circumcision.

Secondly, Place before your eyes this divine infant, this beloved of your souls, "beautiful beyond the children of men," all imbrued in his own most sacred blood, and suffering for you, in that tender age, the cruel smart of a most sensible wound. Behold he now gives for us these first-fruits of his blood, and will one day give all his blood, to rescue us from the destroying angel! Blessed be his divine charity forever!

Consider, thirdly, that it is the duty of all christians to imitate our Lord's circumcision by a spiritual circumcising of the heart. This God often calls for in holy scripture, and always preferred before the carnal circumcision. It consists in cutting off or renouncing all disorderly affections to the world and vanity; to the vice of avarice, and the lusts of the flesh; that is, our sinful passions and depraved inclinations.—Do you heartily embrace and daily put in practice this circumcision of the heart?

Conclude to give your heart to your infant Saviour, who began on this day to shed his blood for you: but let it be a heart purified from all such affections as are disagreeable to him,

JANUARY 2.

On Beginning a New Life with the New Year.

CONSIDER, first, how many years of your life are now past and gone; how long it is since you first came to the knowledge of good and evil, and in what manner you have spent all this precious time given you for no other end, but that you might employ it in the love and service of your God, and in securing the salvation of your immortal soul. Alas! have any of these past years been spent in such manner as to answer this great end? Have they not all, one after another, flowed away unprofitably into the gulph of eternity, and been utterly lost to your soul? It is well if they have not.

Consider, secondly, the present state and condition of your conscience. How stand accounts between your soul and God? What if this very day you were called to the bar of divine justice? Ah! do not deceive yourself, nor suffer yourself to be imposed upon by the enemy. Your time in all appearance will be much shorter than you are willing to imagine. Many thousands who expect death as little as yourself, will close their life with the present year. Set then your house in order: begin this very day to rectify the whole state of your interior; and live, henceforward, as you desire to die. There cannot be too great security, where eternity is at stake.

Consider, thirdly, how long the mercy of God has borne with you, and, notwithstanding your repeated crimes, has brought you to the beginning of this year, out of a sincere desire of your salvation. Planted in his vineyard, like the barren fig-tree, you have hitherto brought forth only leaves; but see, he is willing to try you once more, and to entrust you a little while longer with his word, his graces, and his sacraments. Take care to disappoint him no more, by refusing the fruit of repentance which he expects, lest he should once for all order the barren tree to be cut down, and cast into the fire.

Conclude to begin from this very hour to turn away from sin, to the love and service of your God. Alas! how few christians seem to be truly in earnest in this greatest of all their concerns.

JANUARY 3.

The Rules of a New Life.

CONSIDER, first, that in the epistle read on New Year's Day, (Titus ii. 11—15,) the apostle has, in few words, declared to us the rules we are to follow in the conduct of our lives: what we are to renounce; what we are to practise; what we are to look for; and to what we are to tend. "The grace of God our Saviour," says he, "hath appeared to all men; instructing us, that

denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for that blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of that great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works."

Consider, secondly, therefore, the end for which our God and Saviour came down amongst us, by the mystery of his incarnation. It was to *redeem us from all iniquity*, by freeing us from the slavery of Satan, Sin, and Hell; by breaking in sunder all the chains of our vices and passions; and by purchasing for us mercy, grace, and salvation. O! let us seriously resolve to lead lives worthy our vocation.

Consider, thirdly, that having been purchased by the Son of God at so great a price, we must esteem ourselves henceforward as his property. This should be our rule in all we do; absolutely to renounce whatever we know to be displeasing to him, and to pursue with all our strength what we know to be agreeable to his divine pleasure. "You are not your own," says the apostle, (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20,) "you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body."

Conclude to take for the rule of your life this holy will of your Redeemer: its observance will conduct you to eternal bliss.

JANUARY 4.

What we must renounce by the Christian's Rule.

CONSIDER, first, that we are enjoined by the rule above mentioned, to "deny all ungodliness and worldly desires," and to be clean "from all iniquity." We are all obliged to dedicate ourselves to God from our first coming to the use of reason. But the sinner, like the apostate angels, turns himself away from God; he refuses him his heart, and gives it up to vanities. This is ungodliness; this is a kind of idolatry, in preferring "the creature before the Creator, who is blessed for ever and ever."

Consider, secondly, that the tempter, in order to draw us away from God, sets before us the deceitful appearances of some worldly honor, profit, or pleasure; and with these he allures deluded mortals to his service: These are the gilded pills with which he poisons the soul. Hence the christian's rule requires that, with ungodliness, he should also deny all worldly desires. For when we thus despise and abhor the choicest allurements of Satan, he stands confounded, and can do no more.

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15, 16,) "nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father (the love of God) is not in him: for all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." On this account the same apostle tells us, (v. 19,) that the whole world "is seated in wickedness:" so that, if we desire to belong to Christ, in good earnest, we must declare a perpetual war against sensual pleasures, avarice and pride.

Conclude to be ever zealous lovers of this your rule, by denying ungodliness and worldly pleasures; and place your felicity in the love and service of Almighty God.

JANUARY 5.

On the Lives we are to lead by the Christian's Rule.

CONSIDER, first, that the Christian's duty has three branches: one of them relates to the regulating of himself; another regards his neighbor; but the third and chief of all relates to his God. All these we fulfill, if we live "soberly, and justly, and godly." By living soberly, we keep ourselves in perfect order: by living justly, we behave towards our neighbours in all things as we ought; and by living godly, we dedicate our whole lives to God.

Consider, secondly, that Christian sobriety excludes not only intemperance in eating and drinking, but also all other excesses and disorders which any way carry us beyond the bounds of strict regularity: it restrains pride by humility, anger by meekness, lust by purity. Christian justice regulates our whole conduct to our neighbors, by that golden rule of doing as we would be done by, and thus excludes every thought, every word, action, or dealing, which may tend to his prejudice or disadvantage. And true godliness makes us seek God, in all things and above all things.

Consider, thirdly, that in endeavoring to comply with these rules, we must not confine our views to the narrow limits of this mortal life: we must be ever looking forward to the great objects of the christian's hope, the glorious coming of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and in the mean time lament the long continuance of our banishment here, and our great distance from him in this foreign land.

Conclude to begin at least with this new year, to enter upon the true paths of life, by a general sobriety, justice and godliness.

JANUARY 6.

On the Epiphany.

CONSIDER, first, that on this day our infant Saviour was first made known to the Gentiles in the persons of the wise men of the east, who were conducted to him by an apparition of an extraordinary star; and on this account it is called the Epiphany. It is just we should all celebrate with gratitude this day of our first calling to the knowledge and faith of Christ, this christmas day of the Gentiles! How great, O christians, is this benefit of your vocation to the true faith! If this alone had been wanting, all others would have been lost upon you; and you must have been eternally miserable. Bless then your God who has brought you, in preference to millions of others, to his admirable light, and has not suffered you to "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

Consider, secondly, the wonderful ways of divine providence, as well as in preparing beforehand both the Jews and the Gentiles to expect about that time the coming of the Messiah, as in giving early notice of his birth, to the Jews by the apparition of angels to the shepherds; and to the Gentiles by the star. But alas! how few either of the one or the other duly corresponded with this great call! and is it not the case of millions to this day, who though many ways called and invited by, and to that "light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," (John 1.) choose rather to remain in the darkness of infidelity, error, or vice, than to follow its unerring conduct!

Consider, thirdly, how the wise men set out without delay under the guidance of this star, in quest of their new-born king, and were thus happily brought to Christ and to his admirable light; while their senseless countrymen neglected their summons, and died in their infidelity. See the difference between a ready compliance with the grace of God, and the neglect of his heavenly calls,—a difference which produces here the distinction of the saint and the sinner; and will terminate hereafter in a happy eternity for such as faithfully follow the light, and a miserable eternity for such as despise it!

Conclude to be ever attentive to the voice of grace, sweetly inviting you to leave the ways of iniquity, and to follow Christ. Alas! how many of his stars have you hitherto neglected!

JANUARY 7.

The Wise Men's journey to Bethlehem.

CONSIDER, first, that the wise men, immediately upon the apparition of the star, set out to seek their Saviour whom it

denoted, in Judea. For by an ancient tradition, and by the prophecy of Balaam, (Numbers xxiv. 17,) they understood *that* was the place of his nativity. Wherefore, going to Jerusalem, where it was most likely they should hear news concerning him, they inquire, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and we are come to adore him," (Matthew ii. 2.) But as the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, and was to be established upon the ruins of worldly pride, and of all the pomps of Satan, he chose for his birth the humble stable of Bethlehem, before all the stately palaces of Jerusalem, as more agreeable to his kingdom, the kingdom of humility and of truth. Happy those souls whose eyes are ever open to this heavenly truth, and shut to the vanities of the world. For thus do they become themselves the kingdom of Christ, even that kingdom in which he shall reign for ever!

Consider, secondly, how Herod was troubled on hearing of the birth of this new king; and so was all Jerusalem with him. How much more happy was the dispositions of the wise men, who desired, at all events, to find Christ, and gladly embraced the directions of those, who, by their office, were qualified to point him out to them? But, alas! how miserable were those priests and scribes, who, directing the wise men to our Saviour, took no pains to seek him themselves! See this never be your case.

Consider, thirdly, that, upon leaving Jerusalem, the star again appeared to the wise men, and conducted them to Bethlehem, and to the place where our Saviour lay. They were filled with exceeding great joy; and, going in, they found him whom their souls desired, and humbly adored their infant Lord. Oh! how precious, how lovely, how consoling is that light, which conducts the soul to Christ, her sovereign good! But then, generally speaking, it sheds its beams upon those only, who resolutely conquer every difficulty and opposition in their search after truth, and are quite in earnest to find Christ.

Conclude to imitate the wise men in their ready obedience to the divine call, in their diligence in seeking Christ, and in their faithful perseverance; and you will undoubtedly arrive at the object of your pious inquiries, your sovereign and eternal good.

JANUARY 8.

On the Faith and Offerings of the Wise Men.

CONSIDER, first, the strong and lively faith of the wise men. Instead of an infant king attended with that state and pomp most suitable to the dignity of one born to be monarch of the

universe, they find nothing but poverty and humility. So great, however, is their faith, that neither the manger, the ox, or the ass, nor the extreme meanness of the new-born Saviour's whole equipage, can shake it. Under this poor and humble disguise, they adore their King, their God, and their Redeemer. Happy those who take no scandal at the crib or at the cross of Christ; but rather unite themselves the closer to their Lord, the more he has debased himself for the love of them!

Consider, secondly, how the wise men, after their homage of adoration, arose and made their offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; to signify, by the quality of these gifts, their faith in him to whom they gave them. They presented him with their gold, as a tribute due to their King; they offered him incense, used in the divine worship, as to their God; and they gave him their myrrh, which was used in the burial of the dead, as to a mortal man who came to redeem all mankind by his death. Let us also, by their example, daily offer him our best homages, in all these qualities; as our King, as our God, and our Redeemer.

Consider, thirdly, that the wise men, having found Christ, were admonished from heaven not to return any more to Herod; and so went back another way to their own country: to teach us, that after finding Christ, we must return no more to his and our enemies, Satan and Sin; but must hasten to our true country by a quite different road from that by which we left it. Our true country is Paradise. We came away from this our country by pride, by disobedience, by the love of these visible things, and by gratifying our sensual appetite with the forbidden fruit of intemperance. We must return by true repentance, by humility, by wholesome self-denials, and the mortification of our disorderly passions.

Conclude, therefore, to quit the broad road of sin and sensual pleasures: choose the narrow way of penance and christian temperance, and you will arrive safe in your true country, and at your father's house.

JANUARY 9.

On the Offerings we must make by the Example of the Wise Men.

CONSIDER, first, that, like the wise men, we also must present our best offerings to our Lord. We must pay him the tribute of OUR GOLD; that is, we must daily present to him our souls, stamped with his own image, and burnished with divine love. This is the gold which our great king expects from us. When the Jews asked him concerning their paying tribute to Cæsar, he called for their coin, which had upon it the image of

Cæsar; and thence concluded, that they were to "render to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's," (Matth. xxii,) that is, to give him what was stamped with his image. Our souls are stamped with God's own image, to this very end, that we should give them in tribute to him, by perfect love. Render then to God the things that are God's, by daily acts of fervent charity; and you shall have given him your GOLD.

Consider, secondly, that prayer is the FRANKINCENSE which, in imitation of the wise men, we must present to our Saviour, as to our God. This we must daily offer him at the hours of incense, as a morning and evening sacrifice in the temple of God, which is within our souls; with this we ought also to endeavor to perfume, in some measure, all our other daily actions and employments. Thus they will become highly agreeable to our Lord; thus they will "ascend as incense in his sight."

Consider, thirdly, that we must also offer him our MYRRH, which is an emblem of the mortification of our passions and sensual inclinations. It is somewhat bitter indeed, and disagreeable to our nature: but it is sovereignly wholesome, and necessary to keep the soul from the corruption of sin. Hence we are commanded by our Lord to deny ourselves daily in this world, if we would become his disciples. So that this offering of myrrh, like the other two, should be the constant exercise of a christian.

Conclude to neglect none of these three great duties; and then both your offerings and yourself will become acceptable to the king of heaven: in return you shall partake of his immense felicity.

JANUARY 10.

On the Gospel of the Sunday within the octave of the Epiphany.

CONSIDER, first, that Jesus, Mary and Joseph went every year up to Jerusalem to the temple of God upon the solemn festivals, notwithstanding their poverty, and their distance of three days journey from Jerusalem. There they employed the weeks appointed for the solemnities, in assisting at the public worship, praises, and sacrifices, offered to God in the temple at those times. Christians, learn from this great example, the diligence with which you ought to assist at the public worship of God upon festivals. Suffer not every trifling difficulty to hinder your attendance in God's temple on those days; since neither the length of the journey nor the expense attending their long stay at Jerusalem, diverted this holy family from an exact observance of these religious duties. Let us strive to

imitate their pious example, and their great devotion in the temple.

Consider, secondly, that when Jesus was twelve years old, after celebrating at Jerusalem according to custom the solemnity of the Pasch, he withdrew himself from his parents on their return, and staid behind in the city. They, thinking he was in the company, went one day's journey homeward, and then not finding him, were struck with unspeakable grief and concern for their loss. For in proportion to their love, which was far greater than we can conceive, their sorrow also must have been beyond expression great. Learn hence, my soul, how thou oughtest to value the happiness of having Jesus with thee, and how much thou shouldst regret the loss of him.

Consider, thirdly, that although the blessed Virgin and St. Joseph had lost their Jesus as to his sensible presence, they had not lost him as to the presence of his grace and love: they had him still very near them, because they had him in their hearts. A lesson for christians of good will, not to be discouraged nor to give themselves up to excessive anguish, if sometimes they experience the like substractions of the sensible presence of our Lord, by a dryness in their devotions, and a spiritual desolation: let them but take care to keep their heart and will with him, and they may be assured he is not far from them. He has often dealt thus with the greatest saints; and to their advantage too, by making them more humble.

Conclude not to drive away Jesus by wilful sin; and be assured, that nothing else can ever separate him from you.

JANUARY 11.

On seeking Jesus when he has been lost by Sin.

CONSIDER, first, how great an evil it is to lose Jesus by wilful sin! Ah! it is a far greater loss than if we should lose the whole world besides; for in loosing him we lose our all. And yet, how common is this loss! How often is Jesus lost in this manner even on our most solemn festivals, by the abuse of these holy times! And how is it possible for a christian soul to admit of any comfort, joy, or pleasure, under so great a loss.

Consider, secondly, that the blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were no sooner sensible they had lost Jesus, but they began to seek him with all diligence, and gave themselves no rest till they had found him. Not enduring to remain for ever so short a time at a distance from him, they hastened back to Jerusalem. And they sought him sorrowing, that is, with their souls full of grief and anguish: to teach us that the true way to find Jesus when lost, is by sorrow influenced with love, the properties of a

contrite and humble heart. They sought him with perseverance: to teach us not to desist upon meeting with difficulties and oppositions in our search after Jesus, but to go on with diligence, till we recover his gracious company.

Consider, thirdly, that Jesus was not found by the blessed Virgin and St. Joseph amongst their kindred and acquaintance. Alas! he is too often lost in the company and conversation of our worldly friends; but is very seldom to be found there. The common conversation of the world is at the best but empty, dissipating and vain; and it is out of fashion to speak or think of Jesus in the company of worldings. Therefore, the soul that would effectually find him, must withdraw as much as may be from worldly company; she must make the best of her way by pious reading, meditation, and prayer, to the temple of God in Jerusalem; or rather, she must make a temple for her Jesus within her own self, and seek him there by inward recollection. This is the surest place to find him in.

Conclude, if ever you have reason to fear you have lost Jesus, to withdraw immediately from the crowd, and seek him in his temple, viz: your own interior: there he will console your afflicted mind.

JANUARY 12.

What Jesus teaches in his Private Life.

CONSIDER, first, that when our Lord Jesus was found by his parents in the temple, in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions, he said to them (Luke ii.)—"Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?—He came down from heaven not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him," (John vi. 38.) This was his daily food during mortal life: "My meat," says he, "is to do the will of him that sent me," (John iv. 34.) This, then, was the exercise of his private life, which he spent in obscurity and retirement, under a poor carpenter's roof. He was all the while about the business of his Father; and all his thoughts and words, all his actions and omissions, were directed to his Father's glory.

Consider, secondly, how "he went down with Joseph and Mary to Nazareth, and was subject to them," (Luke ii. 51.) and stand astonished to see the Lord and Maker of Heaven and Earth, submitting himself to his own creatures, and obedient to them. See how he serves them, even in the meanest offices; how he works with his reputed father at his humble trade. Christians, learn from this example of your Lord, that the highest perfection may be found in the exercise even of the lowest

and meanest offices, if in these the soul do but keep close to her God, and embrace him by love.

Consider, thirdly, that our Lord Jesus, who from the first moment of his conception was full of heavenly wisdom and divine grace, was pleased, in proportion as he advanced in age, to show forth daily more and more, in his words and actions, the admirable treasures of wisdom and grace, hidden in his soul; to teach us to make continual progress in the way of God, and to advance every day, by large steps, from virtue to virtue, like this our blessed model, who "increased in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men," (Luke ii. 52.)

Conclude to apply yourself, in earnest, particularly to these three lessons of the private life of our dear Redeemer:—1. To be ever about your father's business. 2. Always to be submissive to your superiors. And, 3. To advance continually towards God.

JANUARY 13.

On our Saviour's Baptism by St. John the Baptist.

CONSIDER, first, that when a multitude of publicans and other sinners resorted to St. John, the forerunner of Christ, and were baptised by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins, and receiving from him the rules of a new life, our Lord Jesus also came to be baptized, as if he had been of their number, and stood in need of that baptism of penance for the remission of sins. The Baptist was astonished at it, and refused to baptise him, saying; "I ought to be baptised by thee, and comest thou to me?" But Jesus insisted upon his doing it: "for so it becometh us," said he, "to fulfill all justice," (Matthew iii. 14, 15.) that is, to exercise and give examples of all virtues; among which humility is the foundation, and supports all the rest. Grant us, O Lord, thy grace, that we also may fulfil all justice, by the imitation of thy humility.

Consider, secondly, that Jesus, having thus humbled himself to fulfil all justice, was presently exalted by his heavenly Father, when, "being baptised, and praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon him; and a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased," (Luke iii. 21, 22.) Learn from this instance, that humility opens heaven, and conducts to God, and to all good. Remark also, how upon this occasion the chief mysteries of religion are displayed: how the Blessed Trinity manifests itself; the Father, by his voice from heaven; the Son, in his human nature assumed for us; and the Holy Ghost, by descending in the shape of a dove. Behold, how the mission and the whole gospel of Jesus Christ is here

solemnly authorised, with a formal declaration of the dignity of his person, and of his consecration by the Spirit of God!

Consider, thirdly, that our blessed Redeemer, for our instruction was pleased, as a preparation for the exercise of his office among men, to withdraw himself into a lonesome wilderness, and there to employ forty days in fasting and prayer; at the end of which term he suffered three different assaults of temptation from Satan, and after overcoming this wicked fiend, was visited and served by angels. Christians, let us learn from this great example, in all our spiritual undertakings to seek first the assistance and blessing of heaven; and since Christ himself was tempted even in the desert, we must not despond, but like him courageously overcome all our temptations, and thus deserve the reward of perseverance.

Conclude to keep as close as you can to the Lord Jesus in every step he takes, and to have your eyes always upon the great model of all virtue.

JANUARY 14.

On the sacred name of Jesus.

CONSIDER, first, these words of the apostle, (Phillip. ii.) spoken of the eternal Son of God, made man for us. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow," &c. This holy name of Jesus came from heaven: it signifies a Saviour; a Saviour who was to deliver his people from their sins, to reconcile lost man to God, to purchase for him mercy, grace, and salvation, and to make him a son of God and heir of heaven. How adorable is this sweet name of salvation in which alone we are to be saved!

Consider, secondly, that the name of Jesus is a name of virtue and of power. In this name the churches of God were established throughout the world. In this name the apostles wrought all kinds of miracles, and raised the dead to life. By this name have millions of martyrs overcome death in all its shapes. This name has peopled the deserts with holy solitaires, and every nation of the christian world in every age with saints; who looking upon Jesus the author and finisher of their faith, have through his name overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and now sit with Jesus upon his throne, according to the promise made to them that conquer in his name, (Rev. iii. 21.)

Consider, thirdly, that the name of Jesus exhibits to us all the divine attributes stooping as I may say, to the work of our

redemption, in order to raise us from the dunghill, and to bring us to a heavenly kingdom. Jesus is a name of mercy, a name of comfort, a name of grace and salvation: it promises pardon and forgiveness to all penitent sinners: it preaches to them deliverance from their slavery, the discharge of all their debts, the healing of their spiritual disorders, which expose them to eternal death. This holy name is the christian's refuge in all dangers, the comfort of his pilgrimage, the source of all his good: it encourages him to pray with an assurance that there is nothing but what he may obtain, if he prays in the name of his Saviour. It puts to flight all the powers of hell; they cannot bear that sacred name; and it opens heaven to all its true lovers and followers.

Conclude to have in veneration the divine name of Jesus, as presenting to your soul the principal object of your faith, the strongest grounds of your hope, the chief motive and most powerful attractive to engage your love. Thus may you exercise as often as you hear this sacred name, all the theological virtues of faith, hope, and the most ardent love of God.

JANUARY 15.

On our Lord's changing water into wine.

CONSIDER, first, how we are told in the gospel that there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and that the mother of Jesus was there. "And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples." Happy marriage, which our Lord was pleased to honor with his presence, and with his first miracle! He himself was the first author and institutor of marriage; and he gave it a sanction in this instance by his presence. By his incarnation he came to join his divine person with our human nature and with his church, and raised christian matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament, by imparting to it a spiritual grace. Happy they, who like the contracting parties mentioned on this occasion, are careful to invite Jesus and Mary to their wedding by a virtuous conduct and earnest prayer. But how very unhappy are those, who when they marry, shut out God from themselves and from their mind, to give themselves to their lust, (Job iv. 17.) "Over these the devil hath power;" because they invite him rather than Jesus to their wedding. And is not the want of the blessing of Jesus the true cause why so many marriages are unhappy?

Consider, secondly, how in the midst of the marriage feast wine was wanting; to teach us that all the pleasures of the world are deceitful, and often fail us when we expect the most from them. Ah! it is Jesus alone can furnish our immortal souls with the true wine which cheereth the heart of man.

Consider, thirdly, that the miraculous change which our

Lord made on this occasion of water into wine, was a prelude to another far more miraculous change which he made at his last supper, and will continue to make by his ministers even to the end of the world, of bread and wine into his own body and blood. With this wonderful miracle he daily honors the wedding feast of his own espousals with our souls, in order to communicate us to himself and unite himself to us in time and eternity.

Conclude to join with the church at this time of the Epiphany, in gratefully commemorating all the miracles of the divine goodness in our favor; particularly our vocation to the true faith, our regeneration in Christ by baptism, and our admission to his heavenly feast in the blessed Eucharist, the most tender pledge of his infinite love to man.

JANUARY 16.

On the necessity of Consideration.

CONSIDER, first, how Satan and Sin everywhere reign throughout the christian world. How many thousands in every nation, of all degrees and conditions, pass their lives in deadly sin, with little apprehension either of death, judgment, or hell! How do they prefer every trifle before their immortal souls; before their God and a happy eternity! They are not moved with the dreadful misfortune of numbers of their own description daily cut off in their sins when they least expected it, and thus consigned to eternal torments! The cause is plain; it is want of consideration. "With desolation is all the earth made desolate," saith the prophet, "because there is none that considereth in the heart," (Jeremiah xii. 11.)

Consider, secondly, the great truths which the christian faith teaches: that there is a God of infinite majesty, whose eye is always upon us; a God infinitely good and infinitely just, who hates wilful sin with an infinite hatred; our Creator and Redeemer, who made us and sent us hither for no other purpose than to love and serve him in this world, and to be eternally happy with him in the next: that there is a future life, compared with which the present is but a moment: in a word, that after the vain and fleeting joys of life are over, judgment will follow; and that there is a heaven and a hell. And these are articles of the christian faith; all most certainly true and in themselves very moving. This every christian readily acknowledges. How then is it possible they should live as the generality do? How is it possible they should live unconcerned in sin; and walk in the broad road to eternal damnation? Alas! it is because they will not think.

Consider, thirdly, that the great difference between the good

and bad christian is—the one thinks well on the truths he believes, and lets them sink deep into his soul, whereas the other does not think; and thus the truths of the gospel make small impression upon him: his faith is asleep, or rather dead, for want of consideration. On the contrary, what wonderful effects has consideration often produced even in the most hardened sinners! it has sent numbers of these out of the midst of Babylon to seek their God in solitude, and has rescued thousands from the very jaws of hell.

Conclude to allow yourself daily some time to meditate upon the great truths of eternity. It is the best means to secure the salvation of your soul.

JANUARY 17.

On the Consideration of God.

CONSIDER, first, that we cannot be saved without the knowledge of God, and such a knowledge as may effectually command our love and obedience. But without the help of consideration we can neither know God, nor love him as we ought. Consideration discovers to us his infinite perfections, and the many pressing motives we have to give ourselves wholly to his love and service. It sets before our eyes his eternal love and all his benefits towards us, and convinces us that he is both infinitely amiable in himself, and infinitely good to us.

Consider, secondly, that God is in himself *eternal*; without beginning, without end, without change; self-existent, independent: he is being itself; he alone properly is: "I am who am," says he to Moses, (Exodus iii.) He is the Being of all beings; all things else derive their existence from him. He fills heaven and earth; creating and preserving, moving, ruling, and supporting all things. He is beauty itself, truth itself, and all perfection; immense and incomprehensible to the highest angels, though he discovers himself to them face to face, and fills their souls with heavenly pleasure, to eternity.

Consider, thirdly, what God is in our regard. He is our sovereign good: he alone can satisfy our souls. He is our eternal lover: his thought and heart are always upon us. His love is most faithful and disinterested: he never abandons those who do not first abandon him. He is our Maker, our Redeemer; the best of Fathers, the best of Friends, the spouse of our souls. And are not these sufficient motives to excite a generous soul to love her God? It is only because he is so little thought of, that he is so little known in this wretched world; and it is only because he is so little known, that he is so little loved.

Conclude daily to cherish by consideration the saving knowledge of God, as the source of divine love and all of your good; and remember, that a deluge of evils will come pouring in upon the soul, if this knowledge of God is wanting, (Osse iv, l.) &c.

JANUARY 18.

On the Consideration of the Law of God.

CONSIDER, first, that in order to salvation we must also have a right knowledge of the holy law and commandments of God. This must be acquired by serious and frequent meditation, without which we cannot even know as we ought, the duties and obligations of a christian; much less shall we have a due esteem and love for the divine statutes and ordinances, which our great King has appointed to be for us the way to life. "Blessed is the man—whose will is in the law of the Lord: he shall meditate on it day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season; and his leaf shall not fall off; and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper," (Ps. 1.) On the contrary, how unhappy are they who seldom think of this divine law, and therefore neither love it nor keep it!

Consider, secondly, that even under the old testament which was not so perfect as the new, God required of his people that they should continually meditate upon his divine commandments, (Deuter. vi. 6,) &c. "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house and walking on thy journey; lying down and rising up. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand; and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house." Christians, the law of God is our greatest treasure; our greatest happiness is to keep it: we must have it written in our hearts, and with the ancient saints meditate upon it day and night.

CONSIDER, thirdly, how the royal prophet has expressed his esteem for the holy law of God in the 118th psalm (alias 119th.) There is scarce one verse in which its beauty and excellence, the great happiness of keeping it, and the many advantages of meditating upon it are not strongly enforced. For this reason the church in her canonical hours of prayer appoints this psalm for the daily devotion of her children. Christians, can any thing else be of so great importance to you, as to study well the true way to a happy eternity? Can any other science deserve your attention in comparison with this?

Conclude, then, to turn your thoughts from vain and curious researches into things little or nothing to your purpose, to the daily consideration of what God requires of you by his holy law, and what is his will in your regard. All other science will be of no avail, if this be neglected.

JANUARY 19.

On the consideration of Ourselves.

CONSIDER, first, that another great branch of the christian's duty is the consideration and knowledge of himself. This self knowledge is the foundation of humility, and consequently of all other virtues. In order to obtain it, we must consider attentively our origin; what we have hitherto been; what we are at present, and what we shall be by and by. Such considerations as these will open our eyes, and convince us what poor wretches we are; how little reason we have to be proud; and on the contrary, how many urgent reasons we have to be thoroughly humble.

Consider, secondly, that your body is derived from dust, your soul from nothing; and whatever you have above mere nothing is the property of your Maker. Reflect, that as soon as you received your being, you were defiled with sin; for, as the apostle informs us, we were all born *children of wrath*: That your whole life has been stained with many grievous sins which doomed you to the flames of hell: and are you not still in this deplorable state of damnation? Reflect, also, how little light there is in you to discern true good from bare appearances; on the strength of your passions and self love; your great reluctance to take true pains in the service of God, and your violent inclination to evil. Then consider how quickly you must die and be cited to the bar of divine justice, under a dreadful uncertainty what will be your eternal lot. Hence you will learn humbly to mistrust yourself, and to place your whole confidence in God.

Consider, thirdly, the other great advantages of attentive self examination. The soul by an impartial review of herself discovers her spiritual diseases to which before she was a stranger; and by this discovery she is enabled to apply proper remedies to all her evils. She detects the secret ambushes of her enemies, especially those more subtle ones of pride and self love, which continually study to deceive her. Thus she learns to guard against her passions, to watch carefully over her own heart, and to regulate its affections and inclinations, and direct them towards God.

Conclude to make the knowledge of yourself one of your

principal studies for the future. Daily pray with St. Augustin and other saints. "Lord give me grace to know thee: Lord give me grace to know myself."

JANUARY 20.

On our First Beginning.

CONSIDER, first, that not very long ago you had no existence: you were not so much as thought of by any creature upon earth. In this low abyss of nothing you must have remained to all eternity, infinitely beneath the condition even of the meanest insect, had not God of his infinite goodness created you what you are. Place yourself in the centre of your nothing: ascribe nothing to yourself but your miseries and sins: give the whole glory of all the rest to your Maker.

Consider, secondly, who it was that gave you your being; this power of thinking—this conscious life—this will, this memory, this understanding. Who made for you this soul and body. No other than **HE** that made heaven and earth, even the eternal, immense, infinite **DEITY**! And why? He stood in no need of you; you could do him no manner of service. He only wished to exercise his bounty in your favor. Give, then, in return, this your being to its Author: dedicate your whole self to his love and service, for time and eternity.

Consider, thirdly, that God made you according to his own image and likeness, the more effectually to engage your love. This image and likeness resides in *your* soul, which is a spiritual being like himself, and immortal; and in the spiritual powers of your soul, namely, your free will, and your understanding which is capable of soaring above all things visible and invisible, even to the Divinity itself. Let not then this noble being lie grovelling on the earth; let its whole attention be fixed on the great end for which it was created—the love and enjoyment of its God.

Conclude to aspire continually to God, from whom you have received your life and being.

JANUARY 21.

On our Last End.

CONSIDER, first, my soul why thou camest hither? What is thy business in this mortal life? For what end did God create thee? This should have been the subject for thy meditation from the first instant of reason. Thou wast made for

God: to love and serve him in this world, and enjoy him hereafter in a happy eternity. How noble and glorious is this end!

Consider, secondly, that, properly speaking, we have but one thing to do in this mortal life; and that is, to answer the end for which we were created. This is the *one thing necessary*, (Luke x. 42.) If we apply ourselves seriously to this great business, all is well; if we neglect it, all will be lost, whatever success we may have in anything else. "What will it avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul,"—and, with his soul, his God, and a happy eternity? Let then all other business be referred to this; whatever is contrary to it, avoid with the utmost care.

Consider, thirdly, the great blindness and misery of worldlings, who live in a continual forgetfulness of this their only business; who weary themselves, like little children, in catching at empty shadows—vain honors—false riches—and deceitful pleasures, which last but for one moment; and for these they forfeit God and eternity! And has not this been hitherto your own case? Abhor, then, the errors of your past life, and return with your whole heart to God.

Conclude, since God is both your first beginning and your last end, to seek and serve him in all you do: thus alone shall you find true comfort here, and heaven hereafter.

JANUARY 22.

On the titles which God has to our service.

CONSIDER, first, that we belong to God by every kind of title, and therefore cannot, without great injustice, refuse his service. We are his by *creation*: our whole being is from him: our whole soul and body, with all our powers, senses, and faculties, and whatever we possess, belong to him. We are also God's property by the title of *conservation*, by which he preserves and maintains, every moment, the being he has given us; otherwise we should instantly return to dust: consequently we are each moment bound to be his.

Consider, secondly, that we belong to God, in a very particular manner, by our *redemption*. We had, by sinning, sold ourselves to Satan; we were become his slaves: we had no longer any share in God, or title to his kingdom: But, lo! the Son of God, through pure love and compassion, comes down from heaven to redeem us: He pays himself the price of our ransom; a great price indeed,—even the last drop of his sacred blood to deliver us from Satan, sin, and hell, to reconcile us to his Father, and to purchase for us mercy, grace, and salvation.

Consider, thirdly, that we belong to God also by solemn vows and covenants, entered into at our baptism and confirmation, by which we were sanctified to be his temples for ever. We belong to him likewise in quality of our King, our Father, our Lord, and Master, the great Sovereign of the whole universe, the being of all beings, &c. Upon these and many more titles his Divine Majesty challenges our love and service, as his undoubted right.

Conclude to render faithfully to God what is strictly his upon so many titles; and give your whole self to him.

JANUARY 23.

On the happiness of serving God.

CONSIDER, first, those words of the prophet, (Isai. iii.) "Say to the just man, it is well;" and reflect on the many advantages, both for time and eternity, comprised in this short word, *well*. Honor, riches, and pleasures, the world esteems most valuable: but these are not to be found where the world is apt to seek them, but only in the service of God. It is indeed a greater honor to be a servant of God, than to be the emperor of the universe. What then must it be to be his *friend*, his *spouse*, his *child*? Can any worldly honor be compared with this?

Consider, secondly, how *rich* the just man is; not always, indeed, in those worldly possessions which every accident may take away, and which can never satisfy the heart; but in treasures infinitely more valuable, of virtue, grace, and merit, which all the money in the world is not sufficient to purchase. God himself is the just man's treasure, whom the world cannot take from him, as long as he is careful not to lose him by wilful sin. The eye of his tender providence watches over him; his angels encamp around him, to protect and deliver him from evil. In a word, God is all things to them that fear him.

Consider, thirdly, the solid pleasures of a virtuous life; the satisfaction, peace, and joy of a good conscience; that sense which the just have of the divine goodness and love for them; the experience of his sweet consolations, in their recollection and prayer; the comfortable prospect of a happy eternity before them; and their tender love of God, and blessed conformity to his will, which sweetens even their greatest crosses. Ah! how pernicious is that error of the children of this world, that there are no pleasures in a virtuous life; whereas, indeed, there is no true pleasure without it!

Conclude then to enter immediately the charming path of virtue, which alone conducts both to future, and even to present felicity.

JANUARY 24.

On the vanity of worldly pursuits.

CONSIDER, first, how vain are all those things which deluded worldlings prefer to God;—mere dreams and airy phantoms! “O ye children of men, how long will you be in love with vanity? How long will you run after lies and deceit?” Reflect upon those who are gone before you; upon those that have enjoyed the most of what this world could afford, of honors, riches, and pleasures; and tell me what judgment they form of them now. Ah! they will certainly cry out with Solomon, (Eccles. ii. 11.) that in all these things they found nothing but vanity and affliction of spirit, and the eternal loss of God and their souls.

Consider, secondly, with what labor these worldly toys are acquired; what a slavery they bring along with them; what fear and solicitude attends their enjoyment; how easily they are lost; how short and inconstant they are; how false and deceitful! Ah! wretched servitude of all the children of Babylon, to things so mean and unworthy the affections of christians, and so far beneath the dignity of their immortal souls, which were made for nothing less than God!

Consider, thirdly, how the word of God describes this folly and misery of worldlings, (Isaiah lix.) It tells them that they put their trust in a mere *nothing*; that they *speak vanities*: that is, that their whole discourse and conversation is empty, foolish, and nothing to the purpose: that they “conceive labor, and bring forth iniquity;” that their “thoughts and devices are unprofitable,” their paths “crooked;” and “whosoever treadeth in them knoweth no peace.”

Conclude to despise from your heart all the delusive charms of a deceitful world; and turn with your whole soul to the delightful paths of wisdom, virtue, and truth.

JANUARY 25.

On the Conversion of St. Paul.

CONSIDER, first, the wonders of the grace of God in the conversion of St. Paul, suddenly changed from a fiery zealot of the Jewish religion, and a bloody persecutor of the church of Christ, into a fervent christian, a zealous preacher of the gospel, a *vessel of election* to publish the name of Christ to nations and kings; a doctor of the Gentiles, an apostle of Jesus, and an eminent saint. Admire in this instance the greatness of God's mercy, and assure yourself his arm is not shortened, and that his power and goodness are as great now

as ever; and therefore never cease to pray to him for the conversion of infidels and sinners.

Consider, secondly, that the church proposes to us the conversion of St. Paul as a model of perfect conversion. The prayer he then made was short in words, but very expressive of the perfect disposition of his soul, and of the entire sacrifice of himself to the holy will of God that called him. "Lord," said he, "what wilt thou have me to do?" as much as to say: Behold me, O God, now prostrate at thy feet, desirous only to know and to do thy will. And to show that his conversion was sincere, he continued during three whole days ("neither eating nor drinking" during that term) to prepare himself for baptism by earnest prayer. This was proving himself a convert indeed.

Consider thirdly, how St. Paul had always before his eyes the greatness of his mercy. He never forgot that God in him had changed the greatest of sinners, without any merit on his part, by an evident miracle, into a *vessel of election*: and therefore he was *convinced*, as he declared both in words and practice, he could do no less than devote his whole life to the love and service of his Saviour. Labor, stripes, and death, to him were welcome in so glorious a cause; and he braved the most alarming dangers with a great and manly spirit. Such are the effects of a true conversion.

Conclude to learn in practice the lessons which St. Paul teaches you in his conversion; particularly a ready correspondence with the calls of heaven, unreserved obedience to the will of God, and cheerful alacrity in his service.

JANUARY 26.

On Mortal Sin.

CONSIDER, first, the malice of deadly sin: it is infinitely opposite to the infinite goodness of God; and as none but God himself can fully comprehend his own infinite goodness; so none but God himself can perfectly comprehend the enormity of this opposite evil. He cannot therefore cease to hate it with an infinite hatred, any more than he can cease to love his own infinite goodness; any more than he can cease to be God. How ought we then to bless his holy name, for sparing us so long under this dreadful guilt.

Consider, secondly, that mortal sin is the greatest of all evils; more hideous than hell. This dreadful evil which the damned see and feel for all eternity in the midst of their souls, torments them more than the wicked spirits themselves; more than the very flames of hell: it is this that nourishes the never dying worm of their guilty conscience; that keeps God eter-

nally from them and them eternally from God. Ah! that sinners had but a just idea of this dreadful evil; they would choose a thousand deaths rather than commit one mortal sin.

Consider, thirdly, that sin directly strikes at God himself. It is rebellion and high treason against the King of heaven and earth. Sinners, like the arch-rebel Satan, renounce their allegiance to God, and disclaim his authority and sovereignty over them: they condemn his power; they slight his justice; they abuse his mercy and goodness. They seek their own worldly honor, interest, and pleasure instead of him; and to these they sacrifice their soul, their conscience, and immortal bliss.

Conclude to renounce and abhor for the time to come all mortal sin; and do sincere penance all your life for your past offences.

JANUARY 27.

On the complicated guilt of each mortal sin.

CONSIDER, first, the sinner's black ingratitude to God in every mortal sin. God is his Maker and Redeemer, his ancient lover, his dearest friend, his constant benefactor. From him he has received and daily does receive whatever he possesses, even his very being. All this he owes to his pure love without any merit on his part; a love which can suffer no comparison, since it has brought the lover down from heaven, to die for the very wretch that thus ungratefully offends him, and even *crucifies him again*, in the language of St. Paul, by sin.

Consider, secondly, the manifold injustice found in all mortal sin: it violates all the rights and titles which God has to our love and service in quality of our first beginning and last end, the very being of our beings, the great monarch of the universe, the Lord of us and of all things, the Saviour and Redeemer of our souls. The wretched sinner breaks through all these considerations, and moreover treacherously infringes the solemn engagements made with him at baptism.

CONSIDER, thirdly, that by one mortal sin we in some degree violate all the ten commandments, according to that of St. James ii. 10. "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." For whoever wilfully transgresses any part of the divine law, violates the first commandment by turning away from the true and living God and refusing him due worship: he is guilty of idolatry by *worshipping the creature* which is the object or the occasion of his sin, "rather than the Creator who is blessed for ever more," (Rom. 1.) He profanes his sacred name and blasphemes him, if not in words, at

least in fact, by treading his authority under foot. He violates the true and everlasting Sabbath of God's rest by the servile work of sin. He dishonors in a most outrageous manner the best of Fathers: he is guilty of the murder of his own soul and of the Son of God himself, whom, as much as in him lies, he crucifies again by sin: he is guilty of a spiritual adultery by prostituting to Satan his soul, the spouse of Christ: he is guilty of theft, robbery, and sacrilege, by taking away from God what belongs to him: he bears false witness in fact, against the law of God, in favor of lies and deceit; for all sin is a lie. And to complete his wickedness he is guilty of coveting what is not his, and what the law of God forbids.

Conclude to detect the complicated wickedness of mortal sin, and make it your continual prayer that you may rather die ten thousand deaths than once incur this dreadful guilt.

JANUARY 28.

On the folly and presumption of the wilful sinner.

CONSIDER, first, the desperate presumption of a worm of the earth that dares provoke by wilful sin the Almighty Lord and Maker of all things, who holds the thread of his life in his hand, and can that moment let him drop into hell. What can he expect from making war with God, that eternal, immense, and infinite Being whose eye is attentive to all his actions, and who has an infinite hatred for mortal sin: a God without whom he can neither live, move, nor be? Alas! the captain whom he follows in this desperate warfare is already damned, his fellow-soldiers are daily crowding into hell, and what has he hope for?

Consider, secondly, how the wilful sinner by his own act and deed freely and deliberately parts with an infinite good, the very source of all his happiness; gives up his title to heaven, and sells his soul to be the slave of Satan here, and a victim of hell hereafter, for mere phantoms, bitter remorse, and black despair! Can any folly be compared with this?

Consider, thirdly, how grossly sinners deceive themselves by expecting happiness in the violation of the divine law and commandments. Alas! in vain do they seek felicity where it is not to be found, and in the way which leads to all kind of misery. They seek for honor in that which is in itself most dishonorable; they seek an imaginary gain in that which brings with it the greatest of all losses: they seek pleasure, peace, and joy; but find uneasiness, discontent, and sorrow: they seek a false liberty, and fall into true slavery: in a word,

they vainly hope to find life in the region of eternal death. And can there be a more deplorable delusion?

Conclude, for your part, to seek your happiness where alone it is to be found—in the love and service of God: if you seek it any where else you will lose your labor, with your immortal soul for eternity.

JANUARY 29.

On the dismal effects of sin.

CONSIDER, first, the dreadful effects of wilful sin in heaven itself. One sin consented to but in thought, instantly changed millions of glorious angels into devils, and doomed them eternally to the flames of hell. O dreadful poison, that canst thus blast in a moment so many legions of heavenly spirits! O dreadful guilt, that canst draw such a dismal curse from a God, whose very nature is goodness, and who loves all his works, upon his favorite creatures!

Consider, secondly, how this monster, now banished from heaven, was entertained by our first parents in the earthly paradise. Alas! in one moment it stripped them and all their posterity, of that original justice, innocence and sanctity, in which they had been created; and of all the gifts of divine grace: it gave them up to the tyranny of Satan, cast them out of paradise, and condemned them both to a temporal and eternal death. In the mean time, it entailed upon *them* and *us*, every kind of evils, both of soul and body; an inexpressible weakness in the doing of good, and a violent inclination to wickedness. It has drawn down the most dismal punishments and disasters, as well upon individuals as upon whole nations!

Consider, thirdly, that sin has, in some measure, blasted the whole creation, which is said by the apostle to "groan and be in labor" under "the servitude of corruption," longing as it were, for its deliverance from the sinful abuses of men, and the powers of darkness, "into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." This will be effected when the reign of sin shall be utterly abolished; and the world being purged by the last fire, God shall make for his children "new heavens and a new earth, in which justice shall dwell," (Peter, iii. 13.) Then shall sin be for ever confined to its proper place.

Conclude to abhor the evil which has wrought such confusion both in heaven and on earth.

JANUARY 30.

On the dreadful effects of sin in the soul of a christian.

CONSIDER, first, that a soul in grace is a child of God, a spouse of Jesus Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost. But in the moment she consents to mortal sin, she becomes a slave of hell, a prostitute to Satan, a den of unclean spirits. A soul in grace is beautiful like an angel, and agreeable to the eyes of God and his saints: but a soul in mortal sin is ugly like the devil, and most loathsome to her Maker and all his heavenly court. A soul in grace is very rich; she is worth an eternal kingdom: but when she falls into mortal sin, she loses at once all her store of virtue and merit, her title to everlasting happiness, and her God.

Consider, secondly, that sin is the death of the soul; it deprives her of the grace of God, and condemns her to the second death, the death of the damned! Ah, sinners! how can you bear to continue one moment in this dreadful condition! Open your eyes to see and deplore your lamentable misfortune, and with the tears of sincere repentance, beg of God to raise you again to life and to salvation.

Consider, thirdly, that "they that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul," (Tobias xii. 10.) And that "he that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul," (Psalms x. 6.:) since of all the evils we can possibly incur, either here or hereafter, none can be compared to the evil of mortal sin. No other evil can kill the soul: this alone murders and destroys it to eternity.

Conclude never more to join with your mortal enemies, the devil, the world, or the flesh, in fighting against your own soul by wilful sin.

JANUARY 31.

On the judgments of God upon mortal sin.

CONSIDER, first, that, besides the sad effects of mortal sin already mentioned, there still remain other convincing arguments of the hatred God bears it, from the manifold judgments he has of old executed, daily does execute upon the guilty, and will continue to execute, even to eternity. Witness the universal deluge, which, in punishment of the general corruption, swept off at once all the sinners of the earth, and consigned them to eternal torments. Witness the judgment of fire from heaven upon Sodom and the neighboring cities. Witness the many judgments which overtook the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness; particularly that remarkable one of the earth opening and swallowing up Kore and his companions; and

the fire from the Lord destroying, in an instant, fourteen thousand seven hundred of their abettors, (Num. xvi.) Witness, in every age of the world, millions overtaken when they least expected it, by violent or untimely death, in punishment of their crying sins; besides many instances of flourishing states and whole nations destroyed by war, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, &c., all brought upon them by their sins. O great God! who shall not dread thy almighty wrath? Who shall not fear the dreadful evil of mortal sin?

Consider, secondly, that though these visible judgments of God upon impenitent sinners, snatched away before their time by unprovided death, be both very common and very terrible; yet there is another kind of more secret judgments, which he daily exercises upon thousands, far more terrible, since they bring upon them a far more dreadful damnation. This is, when in punishment of their obstinacy in sin, he at length gives them up to a reprobate sense, and to a blindness and hardness of heart, so as to have no longer any fear or thought of God or his judgments, or any concern at all for their salvation. Thus they daily add sin upon sin, without ever thinking of repentance; which proves at long run a far more dreadful judgment, than if upon their first sin hell had opened and swallowed them down alive.

Consider, thirdly, the judgments of God upon mortal sin in the eternal duration of the torments of hell. O sinners! go down in thought into that bottomless pit, and take a serious view of the rigor of divine justice; of that fire which never is extinguished; of that everlasting rage and despair: then tell me what you think of mortal sin, when HE who is infinitely good and infinitely just, and cannot punish any one more severely than he deserves, condemns every soul that dies under such guilt, to all this extremity of misery, for eternity? But if any thing be still wanting to a full conviction, turn your eyes upon Jesus Christ, the Son of God: see how he was treated by the justice of his Father, for our sins, which he took upon himself to expiate. Nothing less than the last drop of his precious blood could wash away this dreadful stain of mortal sin. How hateful then must it be in the eyes of the Almighty!

Conclude to give thanks to God for sparing you so long in your sins; and resolve to labor, in earnest, to avert his divine wrath so long provoked against you.

FEBRUARY 1.

On not slighting venial sin.

CONSIDER, first, that although there be no comparison between the guilt of mortal, and that of venial sin; yet even the

least venial sin is so displeasing in the sight of God, that no soul stained with it can be admitted into his presence till this guilt be purged away; and no power in heaven or in earth can authorize any one to commit the smallest venial sin, even to save the whole world; because the offence of God is in itself a greater evil than the loss of the whole world.

Consider, secondly, the danger to which a soul is exposed by slighting venial sins; even the danger of mortal sin, and of all its dreadful consequences both for time and eternity. "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little," (Eccles. xix.) Venial sin indeed does not of itself destroy the grace and love of God, nor bring present death to the soul; but it weakens and cools the fervor of divine love; it lessens devotion; it hinders the inspirations of the Holy Ghost from working effectually in the soul; it leaves her sick and languishing; so that she easily yields to greater temptations, and falls into mortal sin. And how should it be otherwise; since we have so little esteem for the love and friendship of God, as not to care how much we displease him, provided we escape his avenging justice?

Consider, thirdly, the difficulty there often is of distinguishing between venial and mortal sin. In this even the most learned divines are often at a loss. Hence all those are in the utmost danger of daily mortal sin, who disregard venial offences; especially as they generally indulge in a tepid negligent life, and easily overlook the spiritual mortal sins of pride, envy and the like habitual disorders.

Conclude never deliberately to consent to any sin how venial soever; much less to indulge a habit of such sin. It is hard to reconcile a deliberate habit of sinning with the great commandment of the love of God above all things.

FEBRUARY 2.

On Candlemas Day.

CONSIDER, first, that on this day the blessed Virgin Mary, according to the rites prescribed by the ancient law, came to the temple of God to be purified after child-bearing, and to make her offering of what her poverty allowed, namely a pair of turtle doves, and two young pigeons; the one for a whole burnt offering, the other as a sacrifice for sin, (Levit. xii.) Admire in this her ready *obedience* to a law, in which in reality she was not concerned, since she brought forth her son without prejudice to her virginal purity; and her great *humility* in being willing to pass for a person unclean; she who was more pure than the angels.

Consider, secondly, that on this day the blessed Virgin made

a rich present to God in his temple, infinitely surpassing all the offerings ever made there before, when according to the law of the *first-born*, (Exod. xiii.) she presented her son, the first-born of the whole creation, by whom all things were made, both visible and invisible, to his eternal Father. Parents, learn to imitate this presentation, by offering your children to God through the hands of Mary, to be dedicated for ever to his love and service. Christians, learn to present him your hearts, with all your thoughts, words, and actions: offer him your whole being, every day, and every hour of your life.

Consider, thirdly, that on this occasion the venerable Simeon who had received a promise from the Holy Ghost, that he should see the Saviour of the world before he died, coming by divine instinct into the temple during the presentation of our Lord, took him into his arms, and declared him to be the promised Messiah, the glory of Israel, and the light of all nations. At the same time that holy widow Anna the prophetess, who for many years had attended on the Lord in his temple by continual prayer and fasting, was also favored with the like privilege, and made the like public profession of her faith in our infant Saviour. This sacred meeting of so many persons of the most eminent sanctity in the temple of God, the church commemorates in the procession of this day; which we make with lighted candles in our hands, solemnly blessed in the name of Christ, and received from the hand of God's priest, as emblems of the light of Christ.

Conclude to follow, in the practice of your life, the guidance of this great light of the world; and, as he himself hath promised, you shall *not walk in darkness*.

FEBRUARY 3.

*On the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, St.
Matthew xx.*

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

CONSIDER, first, that we are invited by the church, both in the epistle and in the gospel of this Sunday, by way of preparation for the solemn fast of Lent, to be quite in earnest in the great concern of our souls. The epistle admonishes us, (1 Cor. ix. and x.) that we are all engaged in a race, in which, if we do not push forward with all our might, we shall lose the prize: that our contest is for an incorruptible crown, not to be won without much labor and self-denial: that if we are not in earnest, notwithstanding the daily favors received of Almighty God, we shall be excluded, like the Israelites, from the true land of promise. In the gospel we are admonished, that we

have but one business in this world, represented under the figure of laboring in the vineyard of our Lord: that in this labor we are to spend the short day of our mortal life, and by persevering till night, are to secure to our souls the wages of a happy eternity.

Consider, secondly, in the parable of this day's gospel the great attention of the divine goodness in every age since the beginning of the world, and in every part of the life of man, to invite laborers into his vineyard. What need then has he of our labors? or of what service can we be to him? The gain will be entirely our own, and will consist in our eternal happiness. But what is this vineyard of our Lord, in which we are to labor? "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts," says the prophet (Isaias, c. v. 7.) "is the house of Israel," that is, the people of God. Yes; our own souls are the vineyard we are commanded to cultivate: and no one can be excused from this labor. To labor here to the purpose we must first root out the poisonous weeds of sinful habit, and then plant the good plants of christian virtues, which we must carefully cherish till they bring forth fruit worthy of the great Lord and Master of the vineyard.

Consider, thirdly, how early in the morning your God invited you to work in his vineyard, by giving you an early knowledge of himself and the end for which you were created; and how frequently he has pressed you ever since, by his gracious calls to begin this work in good earnest. But can you say, you have yet begun? May he not justly reproach you, as he did those whom he found standing in the market place at the eleventh hour; "why stand you here all the day idle?" Alas! are you not *idle* while you are doing nothing to the purpose of answering the great end for which you were made? Ah! begin now at least to labor: perhaps this is your last hour: your day is far spent: the night is coming on, "when no man can work," (John ix. 4.)

Conclude to make good use of this fresh summons to labor for eternal life, lest if you still are deaf to the call of God, you realize in yourself that sentence, with which our Lord concludes the parable of this Sunday: "Many are called, but few are chosen."

FEBRUARY 4.

On the multitude of our sins.

CONSIDER, first, how early you abandoned your God by sin, and how much your sins have been daily multiplied since that unhappy hour. Lucifer and his companions were cast down headlong into hell, because immediately after their creation,

instead of turning to God as their duty required, they deserted him by pride, and by shaking off his sweet yoke: and have you not imitated these rebels at the first dawning of your reason by turning your back upon your Maker, and preferring your own disorderly inclinations before him?

Consider, secondly, how you have gone on daily adding sin to sin, against God, against your neighbor, and against yourself, by word, by action, or by desire. Alas! is it not true that even from your childhood you have been given to lies, to passion, and impurity? Is it not true that even then your thoughts wandered continually from God after vanity: that your prayers were without attention, your confessions without sincerity, repentance or amendment; and your whole life and conversation without any true sense of God, and of your duty?

Consider, thirdly, to the end you make a better judgment of the immense number of your offences, how little you have complied in any part of your life with the great duty of "loving God with your whole heart," and dedicating to him your whole self with all your thoughts, words, and actions, by a pure intention of pleasing him. How little restraint have you put upon your corrupt inclination; how little guard upon your roving thoughts! How little care you have taken not to offend in words, nor to give occasion of offence to others, &c. Reflect also, how much of your precious time you have squandered away, and how many graces you have received in vain. From these, and the like considerations, you will have some imperfect idea of the multitude and enormity of your sins.

Conclude to be always humble, by a true sense of your innumerable sins; and offer up daily for them the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart, together with a life of penance.

FEBRUARY 5.

On the goodness of God in waiting for sinners.

CONSIDER, first, how much sinners are indebted to the divine goodness, in patiently waiting for their conversion; and that very often for a long time, notwithstanding their continual abuse of all his mercy. Alas! may it not be truly said of you too, that every night when you went to rest, you did not know but that before the morning you should find yourself in hell; and that *you* yourself are indebted solely to this infinite goodness, for your daily preservation? Perhaps fewer sins than you have committed have plunged millions into eternal flames! Bless, then, that wonderful mercy by which you have so long escaped.

Consider, secondly, how many ways God seeks to reclaim sinners, and to call them to their duty. He visits them with

frequent inward motions of his grace, and that remorse of conscience, which ceases not powerfully, though silently, to remind them of the state from whence they are fallen. He sets before them the terrors of his judgments, and the allurements of his mercies. He presses them continually by his word, by his preachers, by good books and good example, to forsake their evil ways and return to him. Ah! remember that the land which has been often watered with rain from heaven, and still brings forth nothing but thorns, is in danger of incurring a dreadful curse, and of being condemned to the fire, (Heb. vi.)

Consider, thirdly, how tenderly God invites all sinners to return to him. "As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted from his ways and live. O why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezech. xxxiii.) Return to me, and live, (chap. xxviii.) Thou hast gone astray after many lovers; but return to me, and I will receive thee," (Jer. iii.) Reflect how the Son of God treated the penitent Magdalene, the thief upon the cross, and all other sinners who had recourse to his mercy; and how he has declared, that "there is more joy in heaven over one penitent sinner, than over ninety-nine just persons," &c.

Conclude to arise without delay, and return, with the prodigal son, by the most sincere conversion, to so good and so loving a father.

FEBRUARY 6.

On turning from sin to God.

CONSIDER, first, that, in the conversion of a sinner, there must be two principal ingredients; the turning away *from* sin, with a sincere sorrow for having offended God; and the returning *to* HIM, to embrace his holy law, and to dedicate the remainder of our lives to his love and service. Happy exchange of that worst of evils, *sin*, for the very source of all good, and the foundation of all true happiness, which is to be derived from godliness alone, and a virtuous life.

Consider, secondly, that this turning away from sin must be effectual. We must not content ourselves with a slight sorrow for our sins, and faint purposes of amendment. We must renounce sin with our whole heart—detest it above all evils—and avoid, with horror, all such company, or other occasions, as expose us to relapse. We must be absolutely determined never more to offend God mortally, upon any consideration whatever. To pretend to be true converts without this, is mere delusion.

Consider, thirdly, that the true convert must arise and return to his heavenly Father, with a contrite and humble, but

loving heart, to be henceforward the eternal servant of his divine love. He must remember that "many sins are forgiven to him that loveth much," (Luke vii.) and that he who has been the greatest debtor is the most obliged to love with his whole heart that merciful creditor, who so readily remits his immense debts. His whole life, for the future, must bear testimony for his love and gratitude.

Conclude to prove yourself a true convert, by renouncing all your criminal affections, and by embracing, with your whole soul, the Lord Jesus who died upon the cross for your salvation.

FEBRUARY 7.

On the sentiments of a penitent sinner.

CONSIDER, first, how, upon the sinner's conversion, his faith, awakened by serious reflection, the word of God or good books, discovers to him what a monster he has hitherto cherished in his own bosom, and what dreadful dangers have surrounded him all the time he has been in sin, and still threaten him with the worst of judgments from God, both for time and eternity. How hard must that sinner be, who is not moved with these considerations!

Consider, secondly, how the mercy and goodness of God, and the precious blood of his only Son, powerfully excite the penitent to hope, with an assured confidence, for the pardon of his sins, and that his heavenly Father will most affectionately receive him, according to his repeated promises made to all repenting sinners. And in this hope he firmly purposes to neglect nothing required on his part, towards obtaining the absolution and full pardon of all his transgressions, and a perfect reconciliation with his God.

Consider, thirdly, that being thus encouraged, he has recourse to fervent prayer in order to obtain the disposition of a *contrite and humble heart*, without which there is no room for mercy and grace; and, with the deepest sorrow for having so ungratefully offended the divine goodness, and the most steady resolution faithfully to love and serve his Maker in future, he disposes himself for the confession of his sins, and for the grace of the sacrament. This is that "contrite and humble heart which God never despises," (Psalm l.)

Conclude to meditate seriously upon the great truths regarding eternity, and to labor with all your power to acquire the sentiments of a contrite and humble heart.

FEBRUARY 8.

On doing penance for our sins.

CONSIDER, first, that sentence of our Lord, "except you do penance, you shall all perish," (Luke xiii. 5.) The virtue of penance always was and ever will be absolutely necessary for every soul that has at any time in life fallen from God by wilful sin. There is no medium; either penance or hell fire must be our choice. Hence the prophets in the old Testament, and all apostolical preachers in the New, continually enforce the necessity of penance. St. John the Baptist endeavored to prepare the people for the coming of Christ by the same method, (Matth. iii.) Thus also did our Lord himself open his mission, (Matth. iv.)

Consider, secondly, that we cannot be true converts without hating and detesting our sins above all evils, because they offend our God who is infinitely good. Hence there naturally flows in all true penitents a sincere and effectual desire, of making him due satisfaction, according to their weak abilities, chastising their sinful flesh: it was the occasion of their fall, and is still continually waging war against the spirit, unless brought into subjection by penitential exercises.

Consider, thirdly, how the holy scriptures frequently put us in mind of "turning to God with fasting, weeping and mourning;" of "doing penance in sackcloth and ashes," &c. Numberless instances are there mentioned, of the divine mercy obtained by these means accompanied with a contrite spirit. Nor can any pretended assurance of the pardon of our sins exempt us from doing penance; since notwithstanding the prophet had certified David on the part of God himself, that "the Lord had taken away his sin," (2 Sam. xii. 13,) he mingled ashes with his bread, and tears with his drink, and every night lamented bitterly his fall.

Conclude to imitate this royal penitent as far as you are able; and make the best atonement you can, by fervent acts of repentance.

FEBRUARY 9.*On the manner of doing penance for sin.*

CONSIDER, first, that the true method of doing penance is not to be learned from the maxims, or from the common practice of the children of this world, who are so much afraid of hurting themselves, and of contradicting their own humors and inclinations; but from the *children of light*, and the practice of the saints. The various religious orders of the church of God are likewise so many striking instances of that true method

of penance, which the Holy Ghost usually points out to those, whom he *convinces of sin*, and makes sensible of the greatness of that evil?

Consider, secondly, how severe were those ancient penitential canons of the church, in full force during many ages; by which penitent sinners were enjoined divers fasts and other humiliations for three, seven, ten, fifteen years or more, for one grievous sin. How ought this to convince us, that something more is to be done for the remission of our sins than we are willing to suppose? And though the church through the necessity of the times has now relaxed the severity of her discipline; yet as God is still the same as in former ages, no circumstance of times can make sin less hateful in his sight, nor the works of penance less necessary.

Consider, thirdly, that there are three particular practices of penance which all ought to adopt, who at any time of life have been guilty of mortal sin. First, they must daily throw themselves in spirit at the feet of Christ and sincerely lament their past offences, with hopes of pardon through his precious blood. Secondly, they must daily offer up to God in penance for them some self denials in point of will, humor or appetite; and retrench superfluities in eating, drinking, sleeping, &c. Thirdly, they should offer up daily in the same spirit, all their labors, pains, and sufferings, in union with those of the Son of God. Such exercises as these are adapted to all states and conditions of life.

Conclude to follow this most wholesome method of penance in the practice of your life. Thus you will prove your repentance to be sincere.

FEBRUARY 10.

On the parable of the sower, Luke viii.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

CONSIDER, first, the infinite goodness of God in sowing the seed of his word, and of his graces, without distinction, on all kinds of soil. This seed is heavenly: it is capable of producing fruit a hundred fold; and yet, three parts out of four of this divine seed are lost for want of correspondence in the soil. Christians, *we* ourselves are the soil in question. If we bring forth fruit worthy this divine seed, we shall live on it for ever in the kingdom of heaven: but if we suffer the soil of our soul to be like a beaten highway, or like a rock covered with a thin surface of earth, or like ground over-run with thorns and briars, the seed of heaven will be lost upon us, and, of course, we must starve in eternal misery.

Consider, secondly, that the *highway* signifies all such souls as live in the forgetfulness of God, and in a continual dissipation of thought, so as to become a mere thoroughfare for every passenger, or for every idle amusement, or every impertinent or sinful imagination—without any care to keep off those wicked spirits signified by the birds of the air, always upon the watch to pick up this divine seed of the word of God, which lies exposed on the surface of the soil. To remedy this evil, we must plough up the ground by daily meditations upon eternal truths, and fence it in by a spirit of recollection and prayer. Thus will the divine seed bring forth much fruit in our souls.

Consider, thirdly, that by the *rock*, or *stony ground*, are meant all those who receive the word of God, and are moved indeed, to make some good resolutions and some slender efforts to bring forth the fruits of a new life; but the rock of their old bad habits, never heartily renounced, hinders the seed from taking root. Their resolutions are superficial; they sink not deep enough to reach the heart. The remedy to this is serious consideration, and the fear and love of God.

Conclude to let the seed of God's word, and his heavenly inspirations, sink deep into your soul by daily meditation; and nourish it there by frequent and fervent prayer.

FEBRUARY 11.

Continuation of the parable of the sower.

CONSIDER, first, that there remains a kind of soil which brings nothing to maturity; this is the *thorny ground*, or those christians who hear the word of God, and are visited with his gracious calls—but unhappily suffer this heavenly seed to be choaked up with carnal affections; or, as our Saviour says, “with the cares and riches,” which he calls thorns—“and the pleasures of this life, and so yield no fruit,” (Luke viii. 14.) Alas! is not this our case?

Consider, secondly, that these thorns of our irregular affections and sensual pleasures must be plucked up, if we desire the seed of divine grace not to be lost upon us; for as long as these prevail, it is vain to look for good fruit. Wherefore it must be our daily care and study to keep these thorns under, that they may not stifle the graces and inspirations of God, and thus rob us of all good, both for time and eternity.

Consider, thirdly, that it is the duty of every christian to be the *good ground*, or of the number of those, “who with a good and perfect heart hear the word of God and keep it.” He must bring forth fruit in patience, by persevering till death, notwithstanding all the difficulties and oppositions he may have to encounter from the world, the flesh, and the devil, in

a constant obedience to the divine law and inspirations of grace. Do this; and you shall reap the fruit of eternal life.

Conclude to rid your soul of all the thorns which hinder its producing the good fruit of christian virtue. Thus you will become agreeable to God and his holy angels.

FEBRUARY 12.

Against delay of repentance.

CONSIDER, first, how many thousands and millions of poor souls have been eternally lost by putting off their conversion. Alas! they thought as little of damning themselves as any one now living: but by a just judgment of God, whose gracious calls and admonitions they so long neglected and despised, when they least expected it they incurred the dreadful sentence of eternal death. Sweet Jesus, preserve us from this most dismal of misfortunes!

Consider, secondly, what a greivous affront sinners offer to the divine majesty, by delaying their conversion. Is it not infinite goodness in him, to have already suffered them in their sins; to have kept them so long out of hell? Is it not an inexpressible condescension, after their repeated crimes, to allow them any conditions at all of reconciliation? How much more, *so tenderly* to call after them, while they are running away from him! whereas he has not the least need of them, but only seeks their welfare. Ah, the wretched ingratitude of sinful man!

Consider, thirdly, the sinner's mad presumption in deferring his repentance. Wretch that he is, how has he the assurance to dispose of the time to come, or to promise himself greater graces hereafter, than what he abuses at present? Does he not know that God alone is the master both of time and grace? and that he has promised neither the time nor grace of a true conversion, to any one of those who put off their repentance till some future day. On the contrary, let him listen to the wise man, (Eccles. v. 8, 9.) "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day: for his wrath will come on a sudden; and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee."

Conclude to repent without loss of time, if you have reason to apprehend you have forfeited the grace of God. It is a dreadful thing to remain his enemy but for one night: that night may be your last.

FEBRUARY 13.

On the folly of deferring our conversion.

CONSIDER, first, how foolishly you act in delaying your repentance. Your God offers you his mercy, his grace, his favor; the honor of being his child, his spouse, his temple: he promises you his peace, his heavenly comforts, his kingdom, his Holy Spirit—in a word, HIMSELF, and all that is good: and you are so blind, as to prefer, for the present, the extremity of all misery, under the dreadful guilt of mortal sin; and to be still the slave of Satan and of Hell. Is there any folly comparable to this?

Consider, secondly, that both reason and daily experience make it evident, that the longer our conversion is deferred, the more difficult it becomes. For, by these delays, the habit of sinning grows daily stronger, and, of course, harder to be rooted out: the devil's power over us increases; and God, provoked by our obstinacy, withdraws himself farther and farther from us, and by degrees suffers us to fall into that blindness and hardness of heart, which of all evils is the most difficult to cure.

Consider, thirdly, the folly of deferring our conversion through the apprehension of confessing our sins. Would not all the world severely condemn that person, who, laboring under a most painful and mortal distemper, should refuse an easy and sovereign remedy, only because it was disagreeable to the palate for the moment? How much more strange is the folly and madness of the sinner, who, rather than humbly confess his sins to a minister of God, tied both by divine and human law to an eternal secrecy, obstinately rejects a certain, and the only certain preservative against everlasting death!

Conclude with a full determination no longer to be imposed upon; and remember that God, who is already highly provoked at your impenitence, can cast you instantly, both soul and body, into hell. Dread then his anger, and cease to act perversely.

FEBRUARY 14.*On death-bed repentance.*

CONSIDER, first, that if it be so dangerous to defer our conversion at all, it must be far more so, deliberately to risk our salvation upon a death-bed repentance. It is well if one in a thousand of those who are guilty of such desperate presumption, ever have the poor chance even of a death-bed confession, much less the grace of an effectual conversion. Alas! they will find to their cost, that "God is not to be mocked,"

(Gal. vi. 7.) The general rule is, that "what a man soweth, the same shall he reap;" and that as a man lives, so shall he die.

Consider, secondly, that if a little head-ache, or other slight indisposition, be enough to hinder us at any time from praying with devotion, or making any serious meditation; how little shall we be able to do, when surprised with a mortal illness, and with the pangs of death! Thousands, moreover, who had madly abandoned all to this last issue, have been cut off by sudden death: thousands have been unexpectedly deprived of their senses; and, which is the most common of all, thousands, in punishment of their forgetting God in life, have been suffered to forget themselves in death.

Consider, thirdly, that the conversion of a habitual sinner is at any time a very difficult task, and requires a strong grace, which makes the soul hate, above all evils, what has been by long habit turned into a second nature, and heartily embrace and love, what hitherto it has loathed. Now if this change of heart be very difficult at all times, and seldom effected without frequent meditation and much prayer, what madness is it purposely to defer the work till you are no longer capable of meditation or of prayer! You have heard, that in whatever hour the sinner shall turn to God, he will show him mercy; but you reflect not that this effectual turning to God, especially upon a death-bed, is the fruit of an extraordinary grace, seldom granted to those whose life has been spent in the contempt of his gracious calls.

Conclude this instant to return to God; and insult not his mercy, by pretending to live in sin and die in grace.

FEBRUARY 15.

On the dispositions with which we must enter upon the service of God.

CONSIDER, first, those words of the apostle, (Eph. vi. 13,) &c. "Take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth," (that is, with sincerity in your intention towards God;) "and having on the breast-plate of justice," (that is, of christian virtue and perseverance;) "in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one," (by a lively sense of God and eternity;) "and take unto you the helmet of salvation," (or an humble confidence in God;) "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," by the frequent hearing, reading, or meditating on divine truths.

Consider, secondly, also these prescriptions of the wise man: "Humble thy heart, and endure," (that is, suppress, and keep under, all the disorderly motions of pride and passion;) "wait on God with patience—that thy life may be increased in the latter end," even to eternity! "For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation;" crosses and sufferings being the portion of all the servants of God, in one shape or another, in order to their great perfection in virtue and christian patience.

Consider, thirdly, that, to attain this christian perfection, there is nothing more effectual than heartily to desire it. "I wished," says the wise man, (Wisdom vii. 7,) "and understanding was given me; and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me: and I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison with her. I loved her above health and beauty; and all things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands. . . . For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.

Conclude to observe these heavenly lessons; and they will make you truly wise, and bring you to all good.

FEBRUARY 16.

On true devotion.

CONSIDER, first, that a devout life is indeed the most happy of lives, and the only secure way to eternal felicity. But then, to be truly devout, we must diligently keep *all* the commandments, especially those two, of loving God above all things, and our neighbors as ourselves; without which, long prayers, frequent fasting, self-denials or alms, and even the holy sacraments themselves, will not avail us to salvation.

Consider, secondly, that the original meaning of the word *devotion*, implies a dedication and consecration of one's-self to God; which cannot be without heartily loving and obeying in all things, his holy law. He that does this, is truly devout; but he that does not love the will of God better than his own humor, is *not* devout, though he pray all day long, and shed floods of tears. Consequently, he that is a slave to any of his passions; he that entertains a rancor for any one of his neighbors; he that sets his heart upon the world and its toys, can never be truly devout, because he wants the very foundation of true devotion, which is the love of God.

Consider, thirdly, that true devotion does not consist in that sensibility which some persons, naturally soft and of tender feelings, experience in prayer; whilst others, who perhaps in the sight of God are much better christians, feel nothing for a

long time but dryness and desolation. Oftentimes the former quickly forget their good resolutions, easily yield in the time of temptation, shrink under every cross, and never arrive at solid virtue. Their devotion, alas! like their tears, is soon dried up, and brings forth no fruit. How much more devout is that christian, who continues constant in his pious exercises, though he finds in them no sensible comfort; and who is always willing to help his Saviour in the carriage of his cross, conforming in all things to the divine will. Sensible consolations, without this conformity, deserve not the name of devotion.

Conclude, not to mistake for true piety, false appearances, and phantoms of devotion—as many do, to the great danger of the loss of their souls.

FEBRUARY 17.

On the opposition of the world and the gospel.

FOR SHROVE-TIDE.

CONSIDER, first, that the Son of God often declares the world his capital enemy; because light and darkness are not more opposite than the *world* and the *gospel*. The world continually recommends what the gospel condemns, and condemns what the gospel recommends. The world is made up of pride, ambition, and vain glory; is a slave to riches and sensual pleasures; and in these it places its whole happiness. The gospel breathes nothing but humility, self-contempt, and the amiable simplicity of little children: it inculcates the necessity of self-denial, of patient suffering, and of being in a disposition at least, to quit all things in order to follow Christ; assuring us, that otherwise there is no heaven for us.

Consider, secondly, that christianity never had a more dangerous enemy than the world, its bad example, and its fashionable maxims; and never yet suffered half so much from the most cruel persecutions, as it continually suffers from those false brethren, who, in their daily practice and discourse, recommend the spirit of the world, in opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us beware of this mortal enemy of our salvation, this torrent of worldly custom, and the maxims of earthly-minded christians.

Consider, thirdly, that the church sets apart this time of Shrove-tide (so strangely perverted by the world) for the exercise of penance and devotion, as a suitable preparation for the solemn fast of Lent. The very name of *Shrove-tide*, in the ancient English, signifies *the time of confession of sins*: and

our Catholic ancestors were taught to turn to God at this time with their whole hearts, by humble confession and penance. Alas! what a deplorable change has the spirit of the world and irreligion introduced!

Conclude to give ear to the divine oracles: "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," (1 John, ii. 15.) "The friendship of this world is the enemy of God: whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God," (James iv. 4.)

FEBRUARY 18.

On fighting under the standard of Jesus Christ.

CONSIDER, first, that ever since the time when man unhappily fell from God by sin, Satan has maintained his tyrannical usurpation by all kinds of artifices and deceits. He allures poor mortals with the glittering show of worldly honors, riches and pleasures, to become his slaves, and to fight under his standard. Thus he establishes among them his laws and maxims, calculated for nothing else but to make them miserable, both for time and eternity.

Consider, secondly, that Jesus Christ came into this world to set up an opposite standard, and to invite all men to follow him; promising them all good, and a deliverance from all their evils. What an immense difference between these two parties! Those who follow Satan are miserable indeed; slaves to ungovernable passions; to infernal tyrants, who are dragging them to hell: they labor under a variety of fears and cares, of sorrows and disappointments, without a moment's solid satisfaction. But how happy are the soldiers of Jesus! What content, what peace, what pure pleasure in the soul, are commonly their portion even in this life, and immortal joys hereafter! Will you then hesitate one moment which of these two interests to follow?

Consider, thirdly, that every motive of gratitude, honor, interest and pleasure, fear and love, time and eternity, concur to determine the soul to prefer the cause of Jesus Christ. Turn away, then, from this Babylon of confusion: break her chains from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion! Renounce, for good and all, the tyrant that has usurped the dominion over this world and its deluded admirers; and turn thyself to the blessed Jerusalem, the city of peace: swear eternal allegiance to Jesus Christ, its glorious king.

Conclude to fight manfully unto death, under his royal stand-

ard of the cross; and learn well the exercise of prayer, and the rules of the gospel, which are the military discipline appointed for his soldiers.

FEBRUARY 19.

On the rules prescribed by Jesus to his followers.

CONSIDER, first, the general rule which Christ prescribes to his soldiers. "If any man will come after me," says he, (Matthew xvi. 24.) "let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." The observance of these three articles makes a complete soldier of Christ. We must renounce ourselves; we must bear our crosses; we must walk in the footsteps of Jesus. The corruption of man by sin; the wounds which it has left in all the faculties of the soul; and the violence of our passions and disorderly inclinations, make this self-renunciation absolutely necessary.

Consider, secondly, that the soldier of Jesus Christ must stand to his colors; he must not run from the cross. He must endure many conflicts; he must patiently and courageously support the labors and hardships of this short campaign of his mortal life. Sufferings and hardships appear as nothing to a brave soldier in the company of his prince. Jesus, our great leader and our prince, opened heaven to us by his cross, and conducts his soldiers thither by the way of the cross.

Consider, thirdly, that the soldiers of Christ must *follow him* by an imitation of his life. He came from heaven to be our teacher and our model; it is the duty of all who wish to belong to him, to show forth in themselves the life of Jesus; to "learn of him to be meek and humble of heart," to be "poor in spirit," to be "obedient to the will of God, even unto death."

Conclude to embrace, henceforward, this discipline of Jesus Christ. It is a *heavenly* discipline indeed; since he came from *heaven* to teach it, and the observance of it is to advance us to *heaven*.

N. B. When Lent begins before the twentieth of February, the MEDITATIONS omitted at this time are to be read in June, after the octave of *Corpus Christi*: When Lent begins later than the twentieth of February, the MEDITATIONS wanting here are taken from the month of June, after the aforesaid octave.

The Meditations for the feast of St. Matthias, St. Joseph, and the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, which commonly fall in Lent, are placed here.

FEBRUARY 24.

On the gospel for the feast of St. Matthias.

CONSIDER, first, how our Lord, "rejoicing in the Holy Ghost," addressed himself to his heavenly Father, in these words, (Matthew xi. 25,) &c.: "I give thanks to thee, O heavenly Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things" [viz. the great truths of the gospel,] "from the wise and prudent," [of this world,] "and hast revealed them to little ones." Learn, then, always to be little in your own eyes: this alone is the way to become great before God, who "resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble." This was exemplified in the apostles of our Lord, and, in general, in all his chosen servants.

Consider, secondly, how sweetly our Lord, on the same occasion, invites us to himself: "Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Alas! we all *labor* in this vale of tears: where man is oppressed with many hardships and fatigues, defiled with many sins, assailed with various temptations. And is not all this laboring and being heavy laden? Yes, "there is a heavy yoke" indeed, "upon the children of Adam," (Eccles. xl.) under all these evils we must run to Christ, and he will refresh us; he will comfort and relieve us.

Consider, thirdly, that our Lord here invites us also "to learn of him, to take him for our master, and to become his scholars. The great lesson he promises to teach us is, "to be meek and humble of heart." In learning this, we shall find a sure remedy for all our evils: without it, could we even raise the dead to life, it would be all nothing.

Conclude to comply in future with this sweet summons and invitation of your dear Lord; and cast off from your shoulders the heavy yoke of sin.

MARCH 19.*On St. Joseph.*

CONSIDER, first, how the Holy Ghost himself bears witness in the gospel, that St. Joseph was a *just man*. And doubtless, the Almighty would never have made choice of one to be the bridegroom of the purest of virgins, and the foster-father and guardian of his own Divine Son, who was not consummate in purity and sanctity. He joined perfect continence with the state of marriage; preserved an admirable evenness of soul

under all events, how adverse soever; and on all occasions cheerfully submitted his will to the appointments of Heaven.

Consider, secondly, how lively was St. Joseph's faith, in readily believing the most difficult mysteries relative to the incarnation of the Son of God. How ardent was his love, and how tender his concern for him in his infancy and childhood! Admire also his great diligence in all that belonged to his charge; his meekness and charity to the blessed Virgin, when, to his unspeakable surprise, he found her with child; his perfect obedience to every intimation of the will of Heaven, whatever hardships and labors it might cost him, as in the case of his flight into Egypt; his patience under afflictions, and in toiling for a poor livelihood for Jesus and Mary, in the humble profession of a carpenter, notwithstanding his royal extraction; and his amiable simplicity, and constant attention to please God in all his actions. We see, by his example, that perfect sanctity may be found even in the midst of the distractions of a worldly calling; and that if we are not saints, it is not the fault of our calling, but of our not corresponding with divine grace.

Consider, thirdly, in the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the great error of the world, which flees with so much horror from poverty and labor, conceiving them to be great evils. Of these the wisdom of God made choice for himself, his blessed mother, and his reputed father; and they ennobled them by their life and practice. If your condition be that of the rich, be not high-minded, but rather humble yourself to see you are so unlike that blessed family; and dread the many dangers to which your riches must expose you. Despise not the poor, but succor and respect them as the relations of Christ: you have his authority for so doing. If you are poor, remember you wear the livery of Christ and his family; and cease to murmur at the hardships of your state.

Conclude to imitate the virtues of St. Joseph; and you will experience his powerful intercession, both in life and death.

MARCH 25.

On the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

CONSIDER, first, how the angel Gabriel, (Luke i. 26,) &c., was sent from God into a city of Gallilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin.—“and the Virgin's name was MARY. And the angel being come in, said to her, Hail, full of grace! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. And when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying,” &c.

“And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called *the Son of the Most High*—and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Consider, secondly, the great lessons taught us by the blessed virgin on this occasion. Her humility causes her to hear with astonishment and much trouble, the extraordinary commendations given her by the angel. Nor is she puffed up with those wonderful privileges offered her on the part of God himself: privileges never yet enjoyed, nor to be enjoyed, by any other but herself. Her great love of purity appears in that solicitude, with which she inquires how the Son of God should be born of her, since she had consecrated by vow her virginity to God. “How shall this be,” says she; “for I know not man.” Upon the angel’s declaring that she should conceive by the Holy Ghost, so as still to remain a pure maid, she, with perfect conformity to the will of God, and the most profound humility, cries out, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.”

Consider, thirdly, that as soon as the blessed Virgin had thus given her consent, she conceived by the Holy Ghost, who, by his almighty power, formed a body out of her purest blood, and created for that body an immortal soul: and this body and soul were that instant assumed, and united to the eternal Word, the Son of God and the second person of the most blessed Trinity. Thus, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us,” (John i.) The incarnation of the Son of God is the source of all our good. In making God man, it has made us partakers of his divinity. He comes to be our Saviour and Redeemer; to deliver us from all our evils, and to impart to us all good, both for time and eternity.

Conclude to entertain in your soul a grateful and loving remembrance of this great mystery; and, in thanksgiving, daily repeat the angelical salutation at the regular hours of morning, noon, and night.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

CONSIDER, first, how God calls upon us by his prophet, in the lesson of this day: “Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning; and rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God,” (Joel ii. 12, 13.) Christians, let this summons from heaven sink deep into your souls; and if this day you hear the voice of God sweetly inviting you to return to him in good

earnest at this holy season, harden not your hearts; lest, provoked by your impertinence, he turn away from you, and you die in your sins.

Consider, secondly, that on this day ashes are put on our heads with these words: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return." Anciently sackcloth and ashes were the weeds of penitents. The Ninevites fasted in sackcloth and ashes, and they found mercy. Let these ashes then be a lesson to us, to enter upon this penitential fast with the like penitential spirit. They are an emblem of contrition and humility; let us receive them with a contrite and humble heart. They are also a remembrance of our mortality, of our frail composition and hasty return into our original dust.

Consider, thirdly, christian soul, those words as addressed to you: "Yet forty days and Nineve shall be destroyed," (Jonas iii. 4.) Alas! have not your sins, like those of Nineve, called to heaven this long time for vengeance? And have you not too much reason to fear, lest the mercy which you have so long abused, should quickly give place to justice, and suffer you to die in your sins? Perhaps this is the last reprieve that God will grant you. The good or bad use of these forty days may very likely determine your lot for an eternity.

Conclude then so to spend these forty days in fasting, weeping and mourning, as to deserve to obtain the divine mercy.

THURSDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

On fasting.

CONSIDER, first, how much fasting is recommended to us in the word of God, and by the great example of Christ, and of his saints both of the Old and New Testament: how we are there called upon to turn to God with *fasting*, [Joel ii.] and how the great sinners have found mercy by penitential *fast*, [Jonas iii.] In a word, we are taught by our Lord himself, that all his children are to fast during his absence from us, [Matth. ix. 15.] and that the devil is not to be cast out but by prayer and *fasting*, [Mark ix. 28.]

Consider, secondly, that there are three great advantages in *fasting*. First, it appeases the wrath of God, provoked by our sins; because by fasting for them we acknowledge our guilt, and take part with his justice in condemning and punishing ourselves—than which nothing sooner moves God to mercy. Wherefore let us not fail to secure to ourselves this great advantage.

Consider, thirdly, that another great advantage of fasting is, that, when performed with due dispositions, it humbles the

soul exceedingly, and consequently restrains the disorderly motions of those passions which spring from pride: it keeps the flesh in subjection, by curbing its unruly desires, and it obliges it to submit to the spirit. The third advantage is, that, in proportion as it weakens the passions, it gives strength and vigor to the soul, and enables it to fly upwards towards God, by purer prayer and contemplation.

Conclude to set a due value on this excellent practice of devotion, which has been the favorite exercise of all the saints, and has greatly contributed to make them the favorites of heaven.

FRIDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

On the rules of fasting.

CONSIDER, first, that the present discipline of the church directs us,—first, to abstain from flesh-meat on fasting days;—secondly, to eat but one meal in the day;—and, thirdly, not to take our meal till about noon. The ancient regulations were far more rigorous, both in the point of the abstinence, and in not allowing the meal in Lent till the evening. These rules are calculated to mortify the sensual appetite, by penance and self-denial. If then you find some difficulty in their observance, offer it up to God for your sins. Fasting is not designed to please, but to punish. Obedience will increase the value of your fast.

Consider, secondly, that in fasting we must principally have regard to the inward spirit, and what we may call the very *soul* of fast—namely, a penitent heart. Without this, the mere outward observance is like a carcase without life. We must have a deep sense of the guilt of our sins, a hearty sorrow for them, a sincere desire to return to God, and a readiness of mind to make what atonement we are able to divine justice, by penancing ourselves for our crimes. Fasting performed in this spirit, cannot fail of moving God to mercy. O my soul, let thy fast be such a fast as this!

Consider, thirdly, that fervent prayer and alms deeds also, according to each one's ability, ought to accompany our fast. By fasting we overcome the lust of the flesh; by alms deeds we subdue the lust of the eyes, which makes us covet the mammon of the world and its empty toys; by fervent and humble prayer we conquer the pride of life, and put to flight the devil, the king of pride.

Conclude to follow these rules, if you desire your fast should be acceptable: if you fail in them, it will not be the fast which God hath chosen.

SATURDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

On the great fast of a christian.

CONSIDER, first, that the great and general fast of a christian is, to abstain from sin. This fast obliges all sorts of persons, young and old, sick and healthy, at all times and in all places. To pretend to fast and yet indulge wilful sin, is a mockery rather than a fast. What better were the Pharisees for fasting, while their souls were corrupted with pride, covetousness, malice, and hypocrisy; or the Jews, who continued on their fasting days to provoke God by their customary crimes, (Isa. lviii.) If, then, we would fast to the purpose, "the wicked man must forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and return to the Lord; and then he will have mercy on him," (Isa. lv. 7.)

Consider, secondly, that the true christian fast should extend to the eyes, the ears, the tongue, and so of the rest; to restrain them from idle curiosity, sensuality, vanity; from carnal pleasures, empty conversations, theatrical shows, and other worldly diversions,—unbecoming a serious christian penitent at all times, but particularly on days of fasting. Above all, take care not to break your fast by indulging self-will, pride and passion.

Consider, thirdly, the description which the prophet Isaiah (chap. lviii:) gives of a true and acceptable fast. "Is not this," saith the Lord, "the fast that I have chosen? Loose the bands of wickedness; deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and harborless into thy house. When thou shalt see one naked, cover him; and despise not thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy justice shall go before thy face. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will hear: and the Lord will give thee rest continually, and fill thy soul with brightness: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain whose waters shall not fail."

Conclude to make it the great business of your fast, to break in sunder the chains of sin; and then, by exercising works of mercy, you yourself shall find mercy, and all that is good.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

On the fast of Lent.

CONSIDER, first, that a fast of forty days has been recommended by the prophets of the old law, and sanctified by Christ himself. Moses fasted forty days, (Exodus xxiv. 18.) whilst

he conversed with God on the mountain, when he received the divine law. And again, when the people had sinned, he returned to the Lord and fasted other forty days, (Exodus xxxiv. 28.) Elias fasted forty days in the wilderness, before he arrived at the mountain of God; where he was favored with the vision of God, as far as man is capable of seeing him in this life, (3 Kings, xix. 8.) Christ our Lord, before he entered upon his ministry, retired into a wilderness, and there employed forty days in prayer and fasting, (St. Matthew iv. 2.) These great examples we are now called upon, according to our small abilities, to imitate, by this forty days fast of Lent.

Consider, secondly, that the fast of Lent began with christianity itself; and, with christianity, has been received by all people and nations which have received the faith and law of Christ. Embrace then, with alacrity, this apostolical practice, this precious remnant of primitive discipline: but let it be with a penitential spirit. "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation," (2 Corinthians vi. 2.) These forty days, if you make good use of them, will be happy days to you. "O seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him whilst he is near," [Isa. lv.]

Consider, thirdly, that the great end of Lent is, to do penance for our sins; to go daily with Magdalene to the feet of Christ, and to wash them in spirit, with tears of repentance and of love; that, as he said of Magdalene, [St. Luke vii.] "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much;" so, he may also say it of us. O, let this be our constant exercise during this holy time; and we shall not fail of the remission of our sins, and the happy recovery of God's friendship.

Conclude to make the best use of these days of salvation, and heartily return to your sovereign good.

MONDAY AFTER THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

The ends of the institution of Lent.

CONSIDER, first, that besides the main design of Lent, which is to do penance for the sins of the year and of our whole life, it is also a time of particular devotion to the sacred passion of our dear Redeemer, and in which we may in such manner purify our souls by spiritual exercises, as to be fit to approach worthily to the divine mysteries at Easter. See, my soul, thou keep Lent so as to answer these ends.

Consider, secondly, that Lent is a time which God particularly claims for himself, as being the tithe of the year, which therefore ought to be set aside for him. In the law he appointed that the tithes of all things should be sanctified to him,

[Leviticus xxvii.] And surely, nothing could be more meet than that we should offer at least our tithes to him who gives us all. How justly then does he require the tithes of our years to be dedicated in a special manner to his service?

Consider, thirdly, that the time of Lent should be employed by people in the world, in taking a serious view of the whole state of their interior, by a spiritual retirement from noise and dissipation. Now is the time for them to see and examine how the soul stands affected with relation to her God, her neighbor, and herself: how she acquits herself of all her duties, both those incumbent on all christians, and those that are peculiar to her respective calling, or relate to others under her charge. Now is the time to search diligently into such secret sins as are apt to be concealed in the soul under some pretext of good, and the folds of self-love. In a word, now is the time to acquire a true knowledge of ourselves, in order to the reformation of our life.

Conclude to apply yourself at this holy season to take in pieces the whole method of your life, and resolutely to correct in yourself whatever you find amiss.

TUESDAY, FIRST WEEK IN LENT.

On the examination of the state of our interior.

CONSIDER, first, how many there are in the world who pass their whole lives in mortal sin, and yet for want of looking into themselves are not sensible of it! How many imagine themselves to be alive, and "have the name of being alive, and yet are dead!" [Apoc. iii. 1.] How many imagine their souls to be rich and wealthy and to stand in need of nothing, and they "know not that" in truth, and in the sight of God, "they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," [Apoc. iii. 17.] "O from my hidden sins cleanse me, O Lord; and for the sins of others spare thy servant," [Psalm xxviii. 13, 14.]

Consider, secondly, that a christian cannot be in the state of grace or in the way of salvation, if he love not God above all things. What then, my soul, are thy real dispositions with regard to thy God? Is there nothing thou lovest more than God? Whence comes it then, that commonly he is so seldom thought of in the course of the day? Whence comes it, that upon every occasion worldly honor, temporal interest and sensual pleasures make thee turn thy back on him? If thou art not resolutely determined for no honor, no interest, no pleasure, no human respect, no fear, no love; for nothing, in a word, that the world can give or take away, to be disloyal to

thy God; his love is not in thee, and thou art none of his. But then, to know thy true disposition in this regard, examine thy works. "If you love me," saith the Lord, "keep my commandments," [John xiv. 15.]

Consider, thirdly, with regard to the love of our neighbor [another great branch of the christian's duty;] what are our sentiments. Do we live up to the rules of charity in his regard? Are we just in our thoughts, words, and works towards him; or rather are we not censorious in our judgment, bitter in our speech, hasty and passionate in our carriage? Do we never injure him in his reputation, his goods or peace of mind, by detraction, tale bearing or affronts? Are we just in all our dealings with him? Do we do by him in all things, as we would be done by, if we were in his case? Have we no secret hatred or malice against any one soul upon earth?

Conclude to study seriously to know yourself, that you may effectually amend your life.

EMBER-WEDNESDAY, FIRST WEEK IN LENT.

On a farther examination of the soul.

CONSIDER, first, that *carnal* sins are not so easily overlooked though even in these, sometimes persons deceive themselves: but very many take little or no notice of their *spiritual* sins, which though less infamous in the eyes of men, are not less heinous in the sight of God. Let each one then examine himself thoroughly upon these heads; for spiritual sins are commonly very subtle, and not easily discerned, without a diligent search. Oftentimes the most guilty will not believe themselves any way concerned.

Consider, secondly, then, my soul, how full thou art of thyself; how fond of every thing that flatters thee; how presumptuous and self-sufficient; how apt to compare thyself with others in thy thoughts, and proudly to give thyself the preference; how impatient of contradiction or reproof; how much more solicitous for thy worldly honor, than for the glory of God. And what is all this but an unhappy pride, which is corrupting thy very vitals? Does not covetousness also reign in thy heart? The greatest miser does not think himself covetous: but the tree is to be known by its fruits; such as an anxious care and perpetual solicitude about the things of this world, and a strange unwillingness to part with money even when the honor of God or our neighbor's necessities call for it.

Consider, thirdly, whether there be no person to whom you bear a secret *envy*: no one whose praises, whose endowments, whose virtues make you uneasy. O! how common is this mor-

tal crime; and how many detractions and other evils does it produce; and yet how few observe it! Then, as to secret *malice*, rancor and hatred—how do you think, speak and act with relation to your supposed enemies? Lastly, with regard to *spiritual sloth*, which is a clog upon the soul infinitely opposite to the love of God, how frequently does it amount to mortal sin; and alas! how seldom do lukewarm christians take notice of it!

Conclude to declare an eternal war against all these capital vices, particularly that which you have reason to think is your ruling passion.

THURSDAY IN EMBER-WEEK.

Other sins which require examination.

CONSIDER, first, how you discharge, not only the duties common to all christians, but also those encumbent on you in your particular station of life. The grand duty of man is to dedicate himself, without reserve, to the love and service of his Maker. All thy days, O man, are given thee for this end. The omission of this great duty is highly criminal. Millions are lost by this omission; who, though they are neither guilty of blasphemy, nor murder, nor adultery, nor theft, &c. are justly condemned for neglecting to dedicate themselves, in earnest, to the love and service of God.

Consider, secondly, what care you take of your children, of your servants, of all under your charge. The regularity of your own life will never bring you to heaven, if, through *your* negligence, *their* lives be irregular. Reflect well on this; and see if you are not guilty of many criminal omissions of this kind. Again: reflect on the peculiar obligations of your calling, and how far you perform what the law of God or man requires of you in your station;—for instance, that of a lawyer, a physician, a tradesman, a servant, &c. And if any oath was required at your first admission, or afterwards, see what care you have taken to discharge your engagements.

Consider, thirdly, whether you have nothing to apprehend with regard to your salvation, from the sins of others; and this not only through your *omissions*, or neglect to restrain those under your charge from sin, and to remove from them the occasions of sin; but because of your *commissions* too, in promoting or encouraging sin by word or work, and in contributing to keep up the pernicious maxims of the world, in point of honor, interest, and pleasure.

Conclude, at this holy time to study well what passes within you, and be no longer blind to your own defects.

FRIDAY, EMBER-WEEK.

On exercising works of mercy.

CONSIDER, first, that in order to find mercy we must show mercy. "Blessed are the merciful, saith our Lord; for they shall obtain mercy," (Matthew v. 7.) On the other hand, "judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy," (James ii. 13. Isa. i.) If, then, you desire at this time effectually to sue for the divine mercy in the forgiveness of your sins, let your fasting and prayer be accompanied with alms-deeds. If you have much, give abundantly; if but little, take care even so to be willing to bestow a little, (Tob. iv. 9.)

Consider, secondly that the word of God promises an eternal kingdom, in heaven, to all who are diligent in the exercise of alms-deeds, and threatens with eternal damnation all who neglect it, (Matthew xxv.) It assures us, that "alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness," [Tobias iv. 11.] And that Christ considers what is done to the poor as done to himself, and will reward it accordingly, [Matthew xxv.] It was mercy and compassion that even brought him down from heaven; and mercy must carry us up to him thither.

Consider, thirdly, that our alms, in order to produce these great effects, must be liberal, and proportionable to our ability: "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap but sparingly." What then can the worldling expect, who, for every penny he gives to God, gives a pound to the devil and his own passions? Again: they must be given with a pure intention; not out of vain glory or any human motive, but for God's sake; otherwise they will have no reward from God. Nor can they effectually procure for us the remission of our sins, unless we join with them true repentance, and a firm resolution to serve God faithfully, for the future.

Conclude diligently to practice the works of mercy: but let your intention be pure, and lose not the benefit of them by an impenitent heart.

SATURDAY IN EMBER-WEEK.

On the spiritual works of mercy.

CONSIDER, first, that God, who has been pleased to promise such ample rewards to those good works which relate only to the body, and to this short life, will reward much more those works of mercy and charity, by which immortal souls, made after his own image, and redeemed by the blood of Christ, are

rescued from hell, and brought to eternal happiness. In effect, "they that instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity!" [Daniel xii. 3.]

Consider, secondly, that the spiritual works of mercy are: reclaiming sinners from their evil ways, even the ways of death and hell, by admonitions, remonstrances, &c.; instructing such as through ignorance are in danger of losing their precious souls, or procuring them instruction from other proper persons; comforting the afflicted; encouraging the weak; reconciling such as are at variance; overcoming evil with good, and praying for all. Oh! how precious in the sight of God is a life spent in such works of mercy and charity as these!

Consider, thirdly, that not only priests, but all other christians, are strictly obliged to the performance of these spiritual works of mercy, according to their circumstances and abilities. For charity is a virtue of universal obligation: and no one can be excused from two most effectual means of reclaiming sinners and bringing them to God; namely, the example of a holy life, and earnest prayer to our Lord in their favor.

Conclude to adopt in practice these two most effectual methods; yet so as not to neglect any other means that lie in your power.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

On prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that Lent is also a time of prayer, which is one of the inseparable attendants of a christian fast. But what is prayer? It is a conversation with God: it is a raising up of the mind and of the heart to God: it is an address of the soul, by which she presents to God her homage, adoration, praise, and thanksgiving, and lays before him all her necessities and those of the whole world; begging mercy and salvation at his hands. O how happy it is; how glorious, how pleasant, thus to entertain ones self with God! It is in some measure foretasting the joys of heaven. For what is heaven, but to be with God?

Consider, secondly, the noble advantages of prayer. It gives us free access whenever we please to come before the throne of his divine Majesty, and to make our addresses to him at any hour of the day or night; with a positive promise of being heard, and that he will never shut the door against us. Will any prince of the earth allow such a privilege even to his greatest favorite? O christian, what an honor is this! And why do you not esteem it more!

Consider, thirdly, how delightful prayer is to the soul which

truly loves God. The true lover finds the greatest pleasure in thinking on, and speaking with the object of his love. If then you really love God, nothing will be more sweet to you than this heavenly intercourse and conversation with your sovereign good. This the saints experienced, when they passed whole nights in prayer, and thought the time very short through the delight they felt in the company of their beloved. O my soul, if thou feel no such delight, is it not for want of love?

Conclude to embrace this heavenly exercise of prayer with all your heart. In it is to be found your greatest honor, interest, and pleasure.

SECOND MONDAY IN LENT.

On the necessity of prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that God being our first beginning and our last end; our Creator, our Redeemer, and the infinite source of all our good, justly expects we should daily worship him and acknowledge daily our absolute dependence on him. This is to be done by daily acts of adoration and thanksgiving; of faith, hope, and love; which are all neglected. It was appointed in the divine law that twice every day, morning and evening, an unspotted lamb should be offered in sacrifice in the temple of God, as a daily worship he required from his people: and shall not the children of the new law be equally obliged, twice a day at least, to offer up their homage of prayer in the temple of their hearts?

Consider, secondly, that prayer is the channel through which by divine appointment the blessings of God are to flow into our souls. We can do nothing towards our salvation without the grace of God; but with his grace we can do all things. This we must obtain by prayer. "Ask and you shall receive." God stands not in need of us, or our prayers; but we continually stand in need of him; and the reason he so often presses us to pray is, because he knows that without frequent and fervent prayer, we shall be lost for ever.

Consider, thirdly, that we are surrounded on all sides with dangers which threaten us with the rueful loss of God, and a miserable eternity. We walk in the midst of snares: our way is beset with robbers and murderers: we breathe the pestilential air of the world and its deluded admirers; utter strangers to the gospel, who by word and work encourage sin. We carry about with us the burden of the *flesh*, which quite weighs down the poor soul, with its passions and lusts; and with these are leagued against us all the powers of darkness. Prayer alone must preserve us under all these dreadful dangers.

Conclude to have recourse to prayer on all occasions, since our whole life is full of dangers and temptations: let us make it in some measure one continued prayer.

SECOND TUESDAY IN LENT.

On attention in prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that to pray with wilful distractions is a mockery rather than prayer; it is affronting the Divine Majesty, and insulting the Spirit of God. "This people," saith he, "honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me," [Isa. xxix.] See, my soul, if this be not too often thy case? And if so, seek a speedy remedy for so great an evil. There needs no greater to involve thee in eternal misery. For as he cannot fail to live well who possesses the art of praying well; so, he that prays ill must not expect to live well, or to die well.

Consider, secondly, that in order to pray well, our heart and mind must be fixed on God. But the better to keep this attention in time of prayer, listen to the wise man: "Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not like a man that tempteth God." This preparing the soul for prayer consists in discharging before-hand, as much as possible, all foreign thoughts and disorderly affections, and beginning, by a serious recollection of the soul in the presence of God, and an earnest address to him to teach us to pray as we ought.

Consider, thirdly, that if, after taking these precautions, we still find ourselves hurried away with a multitude of distractions during prayer, we must not be discouraged. For as long as the will has no share in them, they will not be imputed to us, nor hinder the fruit of our prayer. It is the heart which God regards: our care must be to purify it; to set out with a good intention, and not wilfully to retract this—and all will be right.

Conclude upon ever keeping a proper guard over your heart and affections, if you desire to pray well; and this, not only at the time of prayer, but at all times.

WEDNESDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

On other conditions of prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that if in prayer we are more concerned for the temporal goods of this mortal life, than for the eternal welfare of our souls, we must not think much if God does not hear us. For in these cases we often know not what we ask, or, at least, what is expedient for us; and it is a mercy of God *not* to grant us those things, which might be the occasion of the loss of our souls. "You ask," says St. James, "and you receive not—because you ask amiss," [chap. iv. 3.] Wherefore, in prayer, we must "seek first the kingdom of God and his justice," and other things only as far as they are expedient, and with an entire submission to his holy will.

Consider, secondly, that in our prayer, we must join, with purity of intention, a lively faith and confidence in God. The honor of the Divine Majesty is engaged to stand by those, who pray with a strong belief and trust in him. But as for *him* that prayeth "wavering in faith, let him not think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord," [James i. 6.] Casting away, therefore, all self-confidence, put your whole trust in the boundless power and goodness of God, who is always ready to hear your prayer, and to grant your just petitions. No one ever trusted in him, and was confounded.

Consider, thirdly, that we must present our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ. No one can come to the Father but by him, [John xiv. 6.] Whatsoever we shall ask the Father in *his* name, shall be given us, [chap. xvi. 23, 24.] But "there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved," [Acts iv. 12.] Here, then, is the great ground-work of that faith and confidence with which we address our prayers to God:—the Son of God has died for us; his sacred blood continually pleads in our behalf. Through *HIM*, then, "let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid," [Heb. iv. 16.]

Conclude to take along with you the sacred blood of Christ, when you enter the sanctuary by prayer. This will open to you the way to all mercy.

THURSDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

On fervor in prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that we should be quite in earnest in our addresses to God. For, how can we expect that he will hear or regard our supplications, if we present them with as much indolence and indifference, as if we did not care whether he hears us or not? Such prayer as this, will rather move him to indignation than to mercy. It is doing the work of God *negligently*; which is severely reprov'd in holy scripture. Let the great example of the Son of God, "who, in the days of his flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offered up his prayers and supplications," [Heb. v. 7.] effectually excite us to fervor.

Consider, secondly, how our Lord recommends to us, [Luke xviii. 1,] to "pray always, and not to faint;" that is, not to be discouraged if we do not immediately feel the effect of our prayers; but, by the example of the poor widow whose importunity prevailed even upon a wicked judge, still continue to knock at the gate of heaven, till God is pleased to open to us, according to his merciful promise. Oh! that we had the faith, the fervor, the perseverance of the saints; who, like their Lord, sometimes passed even whole nights in prayer. Then should we receive the like favors and graces.

Consider, thirdly, that humility must ever accompany our prayer. A contrite and humble heart God never despises. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself," saith the wise man, [Eccles. xxxv. 21,] "shall pierce the clouds—and not depart till the Most High behold." Humility always finds admittance with God, who ever "resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble." All kinds of motives recommend to us humility. Our whole being is a mere nothing in the sight of that great God before whom we present ourselves in prayer. His majesty fills heaven and earth; and both heaven and earth dwindle away to just nothing at all in his presence. What a figure, then, do our crimes and abominations make in his eyes; and what wretched objects do they make of us!

Conclude then always to join humility with fervor in prayer, earnestly imploring the assistance of the Divine Spirit. None but he can teach you to pray well.

FRIDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

On mental prayer, or meditation.

CONSIDER, first, that mental prayer brings us still nearer to God, and to his heavenly light, than vocal prayer. It employs all the powers of the soul (namely, the memory, the under-

standing, and the will) about him: it opens the eyes of the soul to the knowledge of God and ourselves, and is the true school in which we learn to despise the world and its cheating vanities, and to love God with our whole hearts.

Consider, secondly, that the best method of practising meditation, or mental prayer, is, 1. To place ourselves in the presence of our God, by humbly imploring his divine assistance. 2. The memory must represent the subject of the prayer, and the understanding must be employed in considering the heavenly truths which it here discovers; till the will is properly affected and stirred up to the fear and love of God, to a horror of sin, and a sincere repentance for past offences, &c. Lastly, good and firm resolutions are to be made, of avoiding evil and doing good, and particularly of amending the failings to which we are most liable. This is a most easy and most beneficial method of mental prayer, practised and recommended by very great saints.

Consider, thirdly, that though this method be excellent, yet if God should be pleased to advance the soul to the more perfect prayer of contemplation, in which she finds herself quite alone with his Divine Majesty, and ravished in an ecstasy of love, she must not be restrained by any of these usual forms, but follow the happy impulse: yet so as to take a guide along with her for fear of being imposed upon by the delusions of Satan, or of her own pride and self-love, instead of the motions of the Spirit of God.

Conclude to exercise yourself daily in mental prayer: it is an excellent mean of christian perfection.

SATURDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

On the practice of mental prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that mental prayer is not so difficult as people vainly imagine: it consists in considerations and affections—that is, in *thinking* and in *loving*; and this, in *thinking* on subjects, generally the most easy, and, at the same time, of the utmost importance to the soul; and in *loving* HIM, whom, by *thinking*, we find to be every way the most worthy of our love. We can easily think of our other affairs, and even of every trifle that comes in our way: and shall *thinking* then only be difficult, when we are to think of matters of the utmost consequence to our everlasting welfare? Or, shall *loving* be difficult to a soul which was made to love, and can find no rest but in her love, and which God by his grace is continually inviting and pressing to love him?

Consider, secondly, that the subjects for mental prayer which

are the most necessary, are also the most easy. For instance: the knowledge of ourselves, and what we are, both as mortals and as sinners; how much we owe to God, how much we have offended him, and how ungrateful we still are to him; what he is; how great is his love for us; and what he has done in our favor: the great humiliations and sufferings of the Son of God, to deliver us from sin and hell: the sudden vanishing of all present things, and the eternal punishments and rewards to come. These easy and important subjects of meditations are recommended to all christians by St. Teresa.

Consider, thirdly, that we may, with great ease and much spiritual profit, practice mental prayer by familiar entertainments with our Lord; conversing and discoursing with him, as we would do were he visibly present with us, as formerly during his mortal life; and treating with him in quality of our Parent, our best Friend and Benefactor, our High-Priest, our Advocate, our Physician, our Director, our Brother, our Spouse, our Head, our Redeemer; humbling ourselves before him; confessing and begging pardon for our many disloyalties; laying before him our great infirmities and his own merciful promises, his sufferings, &c. "For since we never want words," says St. Teresa, "to talk with other persons, why should we to speak with God?" And surely none can want matter to discourse upon with God, but such as think they owe nothing to him, and neither here nor hereafter desire or expect any thing from him.

Conclude to let no difficulties discourage you from the daily practice of meditation; and God, in his good time, will cause the light of his countenance to shine upon you.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

On devotion to the passion of Christ.

CONSIDER, first, that the season now draws near, in which we celebrate the yearly memory of our Lord's passion: and therefore the church, which at no time can forget the sufferings and death of her heavenly spouse, now in particular recommends to her children to place before their eyes their crucified Saviour, and to make him the great object of their devotion. His passion is the overflowing source of salvation to us all: all our good must be derived from his cross. Therefore the more we approach to him in his sufferings, and station ourselves near the cross by pious meditations on his passion, the more assuredly shall we obtain his mercy.

Consider, secondly, that the passion of Christ has been always, from the beginning of the world, the great object of the

devotion of the children of God. In all their bloody sacrifices of old, they celebrated before-hand the death of the Lamb of God, slain *in figure* from the beginning. No sacrifices could ever be acceptable to God, but such as had relation to HIM, by whom alone the sins of man *could* be redeemed. Much more now, under the new law, is the great eucharistical sacrifice and sacrament of the mass, a lively commemoration of his passion and death.

Consider, thirdly, how ungrateful are all such christians as not forget the sufferings and death of their Redeemer. May they all be ranked in the number of those, of whom he complained heretofore by the royal prophet, that they left him alone in his passion, and took no notice of him? "I looked on my right hand, and beheld; and there was no one that would know me," [Psalms cxli.] Had the meanest man upon earth suffered the tenth part of what our Lord has suffered, for the love of one of us; we should be basely ungrateful if we ever forgot his sufferings and his love. What then must we think of ourselves, if we forget the unspeakable sufferings of the Son of God himself, nailed to a cross to deliver us by his death from the eternal torments of hell? Ah, christians! let us never be so ungrateful.

Conclude, O my soul, at this holy time at least, daily to attend thy crucified Jesus, by meditations on his sufferings. "With Christ," said the apostle, "I am nailed to the cross," [Gal. ii. 19.] O that we could say the same!

MONDAY, THIRD WEEK IN LENT.

On the great advantages of devotion to our Saviour's passion.

CONSIDER, first, that the contemplation of the passion of Christ is the means to heal christian souls of the bites of the infernal serpent, and to deliver them from everlasting death. Every sinner that looks for mercy, must return to God with his whole heart, by faith, hope, love, and repentance. Now, in meditating on the passion of Christ, we contemplate the great object of our faith, the chief ground of our hope, the most pressing motive of divine love, and the strongest and most effectual inducement to repentance for our sins. Let us therefore gladly embrace this great mean of bringing us to God, and to all good.

Consider, secondly, that we "all have sinned, and need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood," &c. (Rom.

iii. 23, 24, 25.) It is, then, "through faith in his blood" we are to be introduced to the divine mercy; and it is by meditating on his passion we are to acquire "a lively faith in his blood:" so that devotion to the passion of Christ is the shortest way to attain to justifying faith. Nor has it less influence on our hope, by setting before our eyes how much God has loved us, in delivering up for us his only Son. For as the apostle writes, (Rom. viii. 32.) "He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, hath he not also, with him, given us all things?" In effect, what is there we may not justly hope for from such and so great a Redeemer, if we daily meditate upon his passion, and humbly represent to the Father his dear Son's bitter sufferings for our salvation!

Consider, thirdly, that nothing can excite us more to a return of love, than the frequent consideration of that love which nailed our blessed Saviour to the cross. This makes us grieve for our past ingratitude; this makes us lament the share our sins have had in his death; this teaches us to offer our whole hearts to him, and to love him henceforward, above all! Thus the devotion to the passion of Christ procures for us that love to which is annexed the remission of sins; as it was said of Magdalene, "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much," (Luke vii. 47.)

Conclude daily to station yourself at the foot of the cross: it is the source from which you must draw the waters of eternal life.

TUESDAY, THIRD WEEK IN LENT.

On the lessons which Christ teaches us in his passion.

CONSIDER, first, that the Son of God came down from heaven, not only to redeem us with his precious blood, but also to be a perfect pattern of all virtues for us to follow in the practice of our lives: that so the image of God in man, disfigured by sin, might be repaired and reformed according to this great original. Now, although the whole life of Christ is full of admirable examples of all virtues, they nowhere shine forth more brightly than in his passion, in which all the great lessons of virtue he had taught in life, are drawn together under one view.

Consider, secondly, that these lessons, according to the apostle, (Phillipians ii. 5, 8.) are chiefly his *obedience* and his *humility*. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross," that we might learn to be of "the like mind." Adam fell from God by disobedience, and so entailed both sin and death upon all his offspring. But

by the *obedience* of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, we are delivered from sin and death—yet, upon articles of learning and practising his *obedience*—and that also unto death, by a constant disposition to be faithful to our God, even at the risk of our very lives. This is true christian *obedience*, and nothing less will bring us to God. My soul, thou must learn this lesson at the foot of the cross.

Consider, thirdly, that our blessed Lord was in the whole course of passion “as a worm and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people,” (Psalms xxi. 7.) See how he humbled himself under the malediction of our sins, in those ignominious and most grievous torments which he underwent, in compliance with his Father’s will, for the expiation of our crimes. But who is this, my soul, that suffers so much on thy account? Why, it is the Lord of Glory: it is the Most High: it is the King of heaven and earth: to teach thee effectually that true humility, without which thou canst never please God, nor have any part with him.

Conclude to study well these necessary lessons, by a daily attendance upon our Lord in his passion. His cross is the pulpit from which he most feelingly and effectually preaches to our souls.

WEDNESDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

Other lessons to be learned from Christ in his passion.

CONSIDER, first, that in the passion of Christ, his meekness is no less admirable than his humility. These two he jointly recommended in life to be learned of him, (Matthew xi. 29.) These he jointly taught in death by his great example. “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearer he opened not his mouth,” (Isa. liii. 7.) “Who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly.” And why all this—but “to leave us an example that we should follow his steps,” (1 Peter, ii. 21, 23.) Let us then learn from the behaviour of our Lord in his sufferings, to suppress all the risings of our passion and pride, and to imitate his meekness and silence, who, in the midst of affronts and injuries of all kinds, “became as a man that heareth not, and as a dumb man not opening his mouth.”

Consider, secondly, that the passion of Christ is also the most excellent school of christian *patience*. We all of us have our crosses and sufferings; and “in our patience” under them we are “to possess our souls,” (Luke xxi. 19.) Patience

both sweetens and sanctifies all our sufferings: "Patience is necessary for us: that doing the will of God, we may receive the promise," (Heb. x. 36.) As none hath ever gone to heaven but by the way of the cross; so none can ever come thither but by patience. O study well this lesson "under the shadow of your Beloved."

Consider, thirdly, the other lessons to be learned in this divine school. 1. Of charity for our enemies, by contemplating the Son of God praying for them that crucified him, and dying for his enemies. 2. Of perfect resignation and conformity in all things to the holy will of God, from his prayer in his agony "not my will but thine be done," and his bloody sacrifice upon the cross. 3. Of self-denial, when we see how the Son of God allows himself no ease or comfort in his sufferings; but both in life and death chooses what is most disagreeable to nature.

Conclude to love and bless your God for having sent you so excellent a master from heaven to teach you the way thither by his sufferings and death. Let this great model be ever before your eyes; and you shall never miss the way.

THURSDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

On the love which Christ has shown us in his passion.

CONSIDER, first, those words of our blessed Saviour, (John xv. 13.) "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But, O divine Saviour of our souls, how imperfect is all human friendship compared with thine! What love between man and man could ever bear the least proportion with that divine charity which burnt in thy sacred breast, and obliged thee to offer up thyself in sacrifice, in the midst of all kinds of ignominies and the worst of torments, for thy very enemies; for us wretched and ungrateful sinners who seldom even think of thy sufferings and love. O my dear Saviour, permit me not any longer to be thus ungrateful.

Consider, secondly, still further that inconceivable and inexpressible love, which our Saviour has shown to us his ungrateful creatures, rebels and traitors to him and his heavenly Father. For as there is an infinite distance between the sovereign majesty of God and any of his creatures however dignified; so there is between that love which nailed him to the cross for our redemption, and that love which should oblige one mortal to die for another, though he were his greatest enemy. O sweet Jesus, give me grace to return thee love for love.

Consider, thirdly, that this infinite love of our dear Redeemer, and the desire he had to gain our hearts, and to oblige us to love him, could not be satisfied with any thing less than the last drop of his sacred blood by the worst of deaths! One single drop, if he needs would shed his blood for our salvation, would have abundantly sufficed for the ransom of ten thousand worlds, by reason of the infinite dignity of his divine person. O infinite goodness, how little art thou considered by unthinking mortals! But how astonishing shalt thou appear to the saints and angels to all eternity!

Conclude no longer to imitate the strange insensibility of many christians, who though they firmly believe all the prodigies of the divine goodness in their favor, are not moved to renounce their sins.

FRIDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

Other considerations to excite our love.

CONSIDER, first, how *affectionate* is that love which our Lord bears us in his passion. It is stronger than death, more tender than that of the tenderest mother:—in a word, *he dies for love*. At the very time he is suffering and expiring upon the cross, he has every one of us in his heart: he embraces each one with an incomparable affection; he weeps over each one, prays for each one, and pours out his blood for each one, no less than if he had suffered for that one alone. O my soul, had we then a place in the heart of Jesus, when he was hanging upon the cross; and shall we ever refuse him a place in our heart!

Consider, secondly, that Jesus's love does not content itself with words or professions of affection, nor with such passing sentiments of affection as we imagine we have for him, in certain fits of devotion, when nothing occurs for us to suffer for his sake: it shows itself by its effects; and he takes upon himself all our evils, in order effectually to procure for us all good. His love has caused him to divest himself of all his *beauty* and *comeliness*, and to hide all his majesty and glory; that he might become for us *despised*, and the most abject of men; "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity," (Isa. liii.)

Consider, thirdly, that Christ loves us without any merit on our side: we deserved nothing from him but hell. He loves us without any prospect of gain to himself: we can give him nothing but what he first gives us: whatever we can *have* or *hope*, his love alone has purchased for us. He stands in no need at all of us, or our goods. O how truly generous is this love of our Redeemer in his passion! It knows no bounds.

It hath possessed his heart from the first instant of his conception; it burned there every moment of his life; it carried him through all his sufferings, even to death.

Conclude to make the best return of love you are able, by daily offering up to your dear Lord the sacrifice of your heart: beg him to inflame it, and to cleanse it with his blood.

SATURDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

On our Lord's sufferings before his passion.

CONSIDER, first, that "the whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom," according to the devout A-KEMPIS. Hear how he addresses himself, from his first conception, to his heavenly father, (Psalms xxxix.) "Burnt-offering and sin-offering thou didst not require. Then said I, Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will. O my God, I have desired it, and thy law in the midst of my heart." What, then, was this WILL and this LAW, which from his first conception he embraced in the midst of his heart; but that he himself should become our sacrifice, and, through his sufferings mediate our peace! And thus, by his foreknowledge of what was to happen during his sacred passion, he suffered before-hand the torments of all its bitter.

Consider, secondly, the hardships which our Lord endured at his birth, from the rigor of the season, and the poverty of his accommodations. Contemplate in mind his painful circumcision; his flight into Egypt; the sense he had of the murder of the Innocents; the austerity of his life; his frequent hunger, thirst, and want of necessities; his labors and fatigues. Add to these, the crying sins of men: for if St. Paul had such a sense of the evil of sin as to be quite on fire when he saw it committed, (2 Cor. xi. 29,) how much more vehemently did this flame burn in the breast of Jesus!

Consider, thirdly, how sensibly he was touched with the disorders of his chosen people; their malice, their injustice, their blasphemies, and the licentiousness of their lives; the pride, ambition, hypocrisy, and sordid avarice of their priests, scribes and Pharisees; their malicious interpretations of his actions, and their continually persecuting him, even unto death. Oh, who can conceive how much our Saviour's soul was affected with all these evils, and the cruel treatment he met with from his chosen people; and with those dreadful judgments, they drew upon themselves, instead of that mercy which he came to purchase with his blood. Death itself was not so bitter to him.

Conclude, for the love of Jesus, to bear patiently all your

crosses and sufferings: "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him:" yet so, if we suffer with his spirit.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

On our Saviour's prayer in the garden.

CONSIDER, first, that our blessed Saviour, the night before his death, after having eaten the paschal lamb with his disciples, humbly washed their feet; instituted the great passover of the new covenant, and given them in an admirable sacrament of love his own most precious body and blood, went out with them to Mount Olivet. Hither he was accustomed to resort after the preaching and labours of the day, to spend the evening, if not the whole night, in prayer. On this his last night he chose to prepare himself for his sacred passion by earnest prayer; not that he had any need of it for himself; but to give us an example, and for our instruction. Learn hence, my soul, how thou art to arm thyself against all trials and temptations! Learn whence all thy strength must come, in the time of battle. "Watch ye and pray," said our Lord to his disciples, "that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak, (Matthew xxvi. 41.) O take heed, lest if you sleep, as Peter did, when you should pray, you deny your Lord when you come to the trial!

Consider, secondly, how our Saviour begins to disclose to his disciples the mortal anguish which he then suffered in his soul. "My soul," said he, "is sorrowful even unto death." Sweet Jesus, what can be the meaning of this! Didst thou not from the first instant of life, accept and heartily embrace whatever thou art now to suffer, for the glory of thy Father, and the redemption of mankind? Hast thou not even a longing desire of accomplishing thy sacrifice? and whence comes it, that thou art now oppressed with sadness and with grief? Where is that courage and fortitude which thou hast imparted to the martyrs; which has made even tender maids despise the worst of torments for the love of thee? And shalt thou, who art the strength of the martyrs, shrink back at the sight of death? But, Oh! it was for my sake thou wast pleased to undergo all this; to engage me the more to love thee; and to teach me how to behave under all my interior anguish and afflictions, and how to endure them for the love of thee.

Consider, thirdly, how our Saviour prayed on this occasion, that if it were agreeable to the will of his Father, the bitter cup might pass away from him. This prayer he continued for a long time, and repeated again and again "with a strong cry

and tears," (Heb. v. 7,) lying prostrate on the ground, (Matt. xxvi. 39.) Do you also under all your distresses, betake yourself to prayer: but see you pray, as your Lord did, with fervor, humility, and perseverance, and with the like resignation: "Not my will but thine be done." O make the holy will of God your comfort; and your prayer will be always accepted. "Stay you here and watch," said our Lord to his disciples: but each time he came to them, he found them still asleep. O my soul, do thou at least stay with him in this his desolate condition, by frequent meditation on his sufferings.

Conclude, always to bear in mind, what your Saviour underwent for you during his prayer in the garden. Imitate St. Teresa, who did not let a night pass, from her very childhood, without reflecting before she fell asleep, on our Saviour's sufferings in that part of his sacred passion.

MONDAY, FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

On our Saviour's agony and sweat of blood.

CONSIDER, first, what floods of sorrow overwhelmed the soul of our dear Redeemer, during his prayer in this his last night. So bitter was his anguish, that it cast him into a mortal agony, and forced from his whole body a wonderful sweat of blood; which not only embrued all his garments, but trickled down upon the ground, on which he lay prostrate in prayer! But why all this agony, dearest Lord? Why this prodigious sweat of blood? Was not the death of the cross sufficient for our redemption? Why then these early anticipated sorrows? Ah! thy love alone can account for them!

Consider, secondly, how bitter were the ingredients of this chalice, which our Saviour so much feared to drink. He had at this time before his eyes, a most lively representation of each particular injury and indignity, which he was afterwards to endure in the whole course of his passion, now all at once assaulting his soul, and making him feel beforehand all the sorrows, which afterwards came only one by one. But what was far more terrible to our dear Redeemer was, the clear sight and lively sense he had then, of all the sins and abominations of the whole world, from the first to the last, all now laid upon him, as if they were his own: all infinitely hateful, infinitely contrary to his sanctity.

Consider, thirdly, another bitter ingredient of this cup of sorrow, which our blessed Redeemer had now to drink to the very dregs; namely, that strange ingratitude and insensibility of most christians, and their unaccountable perverseness, in taking occasion from his very passion to sin more freely, and

thus draw down upon their guilty heads the most dreadful judgments and eternal death. For if each of these poor souls was more dear to our blessed Lord, than his own life which he laid down to save them; what a cruel anguish it must have been to his tender and charitable heart, to see so many of them blindly plunging into the flames of hell.

Conclude to adore and admire the wonderous ways of God, in bringing about the redemption of man; and be no longer one of that unhappy number who repay all his mercy and love with sin and ingratitude.

TUESDAY, FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

On the treason of Judas.

CONSIDER, first, how sensible an affliction it was to our Lord, to be betrayed and sold by one of his own apostles, to those that sought his life. He, who bore in silence all the insolence of the Jewish rabble, and the pagan soldiers; he, who suffered the whips, thorns, and nails without complaint, could not but complain of this treachery of a false friend. "Even the man of my peace" (the friend whom I had taken into my bosom) "in whom I trusted; who ate my bread," (the bread of life) "hath greatly supplanted me," (Psalms xl. 10.) "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne it: and if he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hid myself from him. But thou, a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats with me," (even the sacred body and blood of thy Redeemer,) "in the house of God we walked with consent," (Psalms liv. 13, 14, 15.) Thou notwithstanding, joinest thyself with my enemies to persecute me, even unto death. O this distresses and afflicts my soul.

Consider, secondly, what an affront the traitor offered to our Lord by selling him for thirty pieces of silver; the price, it is likely, of the meanest slave; basely preferring so small a consideration before the God who made both him and all things; and who set such a value on his soul, as to employ his whole life and death, and give his own most precious blood for his salvation. Christian soul, you detest this monstrous treason. But have you never imitated the perfidious Judas, and sold your Saviour by mortal sin, for something even less than the traitor did; a petty interest, a filthy pleasure, a punctilio of honor, or a disorderly passion?

Consider, thirdly, that no state of life or calling, however holy, can secure us from danger; since an apostle called by Christ, and trained up in his school, and empowered by him

even to cast out devils and to work wonderful miracles, is fallen nevertheless, and fallen so as to rise no more, even into the bottomless pit. O! let him that stands be sensible upon what slippery ground he stands, and by whose grace he is supported and kept from falling: that so, entirely mistrusting himself, and placing his confidence in God alone, he may work out his salvation in fear and trembling.

Conclude heartily to detest avarice, which was the cause of Judas's fall: never gratify covetousness, even in the smallest matter, lest, by degrees, it should cause you to commit the greatest crimes.

WEDNESDAY, FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

On the apprehension of our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, how our Lord, rising from the ground where he had lain prostrate in prayer, all embued in his own blood, goes for the third time to his disciples; but alas! he finds them still asleep, notwithstanding he had admonished them to watch with him, and pray. So little comfort did they afford him in his distress. But the traitor, who is not asleep, conducts to the place a lawless mob, headed by the priests and Pharisees, and armed with swords and clubs, to apprehend our Lord. See, my soul, how thy Saviour goes forth to meet them; how ready he is to suffer! How meekly does he receive the traitor's kiss! My friend, says he, to what end art thou come? Reflect what thou art about, and repent whilst thou hast time, and I will show thee mercy.

Consider, secondly, that our Saviour on this occasion, cast down to the ground all that armed multitude, with these only words: I AM HE—to show, that no power of man could apprehend him, without his free consent. And when Malchus, a servant of the high-priest, more busy than the rest in this work of iniquity, had his ear cut off by the sword of Peter, our Lord not only restrained this apostle from any further violence in his defence, but restored it to the wretch upon the spot; to teach us, by his own example, to overcome evil with good.

Consider, thirdly, that our dear Redeemer, having thus manifested his power and his goodness in presence of his enemies, meekly delivered himself up to them, with these words: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Immediately they rush in upon him, and, as we may presume from the rest of their conduct, load him with injuries and reproaches. Then they bind him fast, like some notorious criminal, and drag him violently along with them, in the dark, into the city.

Conclude to follow your Saviour, in spirit, through all the different stages of his passion, with a sincere desire to study and learn the great lessons he teaches you, of the most perfect christian virtues.

THURSDAY, FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

On our Lord's appearaunce before ANNAS and CAIPHAS.

CONSIDER, first, that the rabble, with loud shouts drag our blessed Redeemer before Annas, one of the chief priests. Go in, my soul, with him; and see the Son of God, the Judge of the living and the dead, standing with his hands tied behind him before this insolent Jewish priest. Admire the courage, meekness and evenness of soul, which thy Saviour shows in his whole comportment on this occasion. Behold how he suffers even a vile slave not only to rebuke him in words for his modest and just reply, but also to strike him on the face before all the company; and learn of him, that true courage consists in bearing, and not in revenging injuries.

Consider, secondly, how our Saviour, bound as he is, is hurried away from Annas to the house of Caiphas the high priest, where the senate is assembled to destroy him right or wrong. Christians, what shall we most admire on this occasion? The malice of our Saviour's enemies, and the gross falsehoods they impose upon him; or the force of truth, and the wonderful innocence of our Lord, which will not suffer the testimonies of the false witnesses to be of any weight against him, even in the judgment of so wicked a court!

Consider, thirdly, how the high priest, finding that his evidence did not agree in their story, stood up and abjured our Saviour by the living God, to tell them if he was indeed the Christ, the Son of God? Our Lord in reverence to his Father's name, and to give testimony to that capital truth, the great foundation of the Christian religion, which he came to seal with his blood, immediately answered that he was, and that hereafter they should see him sitting on the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Give thanks to your Saviour for this solemn profession of what he was, though standing in the midst of mortal enemies. They rejected and condemned this grand truth, to their own perdition; do you embrace and adore it, for your salvation. The high priest rends his garments and cries out *blasphemy*; and all with one voice condemn to death, as a blasphemmer, the Saint of Saints. Be not then so much concerned about the judgments of the world: if it condemns you wrongfully, what wonder, since it condemns innocence itself.

Conclude in opposition to this unjust sentence against the Lamb of God, to join with all the heavenly spirits in adoring him. Be not ashamed of him and his gospel, though it should even cost you your life.

FRIDAY, FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

How our Lord was treated in the house of Caiphas.

CONSIDER, first, that immediately upon our Lord's condemnation, the insolent rabble began to treat him with every kind of outrage, and the utmost barbarity. "They spit in his face and buffet him," (Matt. xxvi. 67.) "They blindfold him and smite his face, and ask him, saying, prophesy: who is it that struck thee," (Luke xxii. 64.) Whilst our dear Redeemer meekly "gives up his body to them that strike him, and his cheeks to them that pluck them; and turns not away his face from them that rebuke him and spit upon him."

Consider, secondly, what kind of a night our Saviour passed in the hands of the mob, after the council was dismissed. These brutish men, incited by the example of their masters, and by those wicked spirits which possessed them, would not suffer our Lord to take any rest during that last night of his mortal life; repeating again and again the same outrageous insults against the king of glory. Besides those horrible curses, slanders and blasphemies with which they loaded him, "Many other things," says St. Luke xxii. 65, "they said against him blaspheming." In the meanwhile our blessed Saviour, when he was reviled did not revile: when he suffered he threatened not, (1 Peter ii. 23.) he delivered himself up not only "to him that judged him unjustly," but also to those vile wretches, who so shamefully abused him at their pleasure.

Consider, thirdly, how the whole person of our blessed Saviour is now changed: behold his face all bruised, his eyes black and blue, and his divine countenance strangely disfigured. And for whom does he suffer all this? For you, O christian, who are reading or attending to these lines! And he suffers even with joy, in consideration of his Father's glory, and of your salvation, which he is to purchase with his blood.

Conclude to admire and to love the infinite charity of your Redeemer; and strive to imitate his patience, his meekness, his humility, and submission to his Father's will.

SATURDAY, FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

Peter's denial.

CONSIDER, first, how our blessed Saviour was now abandoned and forsaken by his all disciples. "I looked," says he, "on my right hand, and beheld, and there was no one that would know me. Flight hath perished from me: and there is no one that hath regard to my soul," (Psal. cxli. 5.) And again: "Friend and neighbour thou hast put away far from me; and my acquaintance, because of misery," (Psalms lxxxvii. 19.) Even Peter the chief of all the apostles, who a little while before had drawn his sword to defend him against an armed multitude, and who had boasted that very night that he was ready to go with him to prison and to death, now basely denies his Lord and Master. The voice of a poor maid putting the question to him, whether he was not one of his disciples, terrified him to such a degree that he even cursed himself if he ever knew the man! Good Jesus! What is man? Of what is he not capable, if unsupported by thy grace?

Consider, secondly, that a secret presumption was the chief occasion of his fall. Christians, place no confidence in yourselves: you are never nearer falling than when your resolutions seem the strongest, if they are not founded upon the rock, which is Christ. Peter slept when he was admonished to watch and pray: this was another occasion of his fall, and deprived him of that grace which otherwise would effectually have preserved him. Bad company completed his misfortune, and made him ashamed of his divine Master. Take care lest the like causes should have the like effects on you.

Consider, thirdly, from Peter's three denials, how easily one fall draws on another, and, generally speaking, a worse; and learn hence, the necessity of a speedy repentance. He passed over, unregarded, the crowing of the cock; and might have died in his sin, had not his loving Redeemer cast an eye of pity upon him, and, touching his heart with grace, drawn him from the wicked company he was in, to weep bitterly in private for his sins: a practice which he is said ever after to have repeated, as often as he heard the cock crow.

Conclude to be always upon your guard; and if you seem to yourself to "STAND, take heed lest you fall." You have not half the strength that Peter had.

PASSION SUNDAY.

Our Lord is led to Pilate.

CONSIDER, first, that the enemies of the Son of God, notwithstanding their late sitting up at night, early the next morning resume their work of iniquity. For the children of this world are often more industrious in prosecuting wickedness, than the servants of God are in promoting his glory and their own eternal salvation! Wherefore these impious men again inquire of our Lord, whether he be the Son of God; and upon his answer that he is, again declare him worthy of death. Nor could their malice be satisfied with any other than the most cruel and disgraceful death of the cross.

Consider, secondly, that whereas they had not authority of themselves to inflict this punishment, they determined to deliver him up to Pilate, the pagan Governor of Judea, and falsely to accuse him of raising seditions among the people, and of other crimes. They publish all the way they go, that now they have proved him to be a cheat and a hypocrite; discovered all his impostures, and convicted him by his own confession of blasphemy; and therefore have condemned him to die. His enemies now triumph over him; his friends themselves seem ashamed of him; and all alike abandon him. O my soul, do thou at least follow thy Lord with compassion and love, in these his last ways which he walks for thy redemption: painful and humble ways indeed, and quite distasteful to flesh and blood; but sovereignly wholesome to the true disciples of Jesus!

Consider, thirdly, how the high priest and the rest of the Jewish council, being come to Pilate's house, would not go in, for fear of contracting a legal uncleanness, and disqualifying themselves for partaking of the sacrifices offered on that day; it being the feast of the Passover, in memory of their redemption from the bondage of Egypt. And yet, unhappy men! they are not afraid of polluting their souls with the most heinous of crimes!

Conclude to adore the wonderful providence of God, which made even the malice of these men instrumental in the great work of our redemption, by the sacrifice of the true paschal Lamb; and that too on the very day of the Jewish passover which was an illustrious figure of the Christian Pasch. On the other hand, beware of your passions, which if indulged, will pervert the greatest good into the greatest evil.

MONDAY, IN PASSION WEEK.

Our Lord is sent from Pilate to Herod.

CONSIDER, first, how our Redeemer under all the wicked slanders and calumnies of his enemies, which tended to condemn him to the worst of deaths, still showed the same peace and tranquility of soul, and still kept silence, to the great astonishment of the governor. For calmness and meek deportment are better proofs of innocence than passion and rage, or returning injury for injury. Pilate himself, though otherwise a wicked man, judged from our Saviour's silence, and the clamors of his accusers, that these were led by envy and passion, and not by zeal for justice; and therefore, after inquiring of our Lord concerning his being king, and hearing from him that his "kingdom was not of this world," he declared himself fully satisfied, and sought to discharge him.

Consider, secondly, how the Jews still insisting that Jesus should be put to death, Pilate sends him to Herod, king of Galilee, as being one of his subjects, and refers his cause to him. Herod, who was then at Jerusalem, was overjoyed to see him, in hopes of being eye-witness to some miracle; and put a thousand idle questions to him. But our Lord is silent still, and will not gratify the vain curiosity of Herod. No, christians; your Saviour has too great a love for you, to work a miracle to deliver himself from that death, which he willingly suffers in order to give you life.

Consider, thirdly, how Herod, thus disappointed, now treats him with mockery and scorn, and clothes him with a white garment, (or fool's coat) as a mock king: and, in this contemptible disguise, sends him back to Pilate. See here, with astonishment, the eternal wisdom of the Father treated by the world as a fool; behold the great King of heaven and earth abused as a mock king, an idle pretender to royalty! Learn, then, to despise the judgment of a vain world, and remember that its "wisdom is foolishness with God;" and that what it terms folly is indeed true wisdom.

Conclude to adhere to your Lord in the midst of all his sufferings, and ever to acknowledge him for the king of your heart, though the world treats him with mockery and scorn.

TUESDAY, IN PASSION WEEK.

Barabbas is preferred before our Lord: He is scourged at the pillar.

CONSIDER, first, how Pilate now offers to the Jews the choice of Barabbas, a notorious robber and murderer, on the one hand; and of Jesus, on the other;—to be released according to custom, in memory of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. This senseless and unhappy people blindly prefer Barabbas; and demand with loud cries, that Jesus, their Messiah, may be crucified. Admire, on this occasion, the astonishing humility of our dear Redeemer, in submitting to be thus affronted and debased; and consider how desperate must have been the wound of our pride, which could not be healed but by such and so great humiliation of the Son of God.

Consider, secondly, that Pilate, imagining the Jews would relent when they should see our blessed Lord covered with his own blood, orders him to be cruelly scourged in their presence. But these hard hearted and perfidious men became more and more intent upon his death. Do thou at least, my soul, take pity of his mangled flesh; and let the sight of so much blood, shed for thy salvation, mollify thy heart, and draw from thine eyes the tears of true repentance and of love.

Consider, thirdly, who this is, thus barbarously and ignominiously treated? O my soul, it is the God that made thee; it is the Lord and Maker both of heaven and earth, who suffers all this by his own free choice, for the love of thee, to rescue thee, his enemy by sin, from the eternal torments of hell, which thou couldst not otherwise have escaped. O my dearest Saviour, never suffer me to forget what thou hast endured for my salvation.

Conclude to make the best acknowledgment you are able, by acts of thanksgiving and of love, and by a constant detestation of sin, the cause of your Redeemer's sorrows.

WEDNESDAY, IN PASSION WEEK.

Our Lord is crowned with thorns.

CONSIDER, first, that the barbarous soldiers, after this cruel treatment of our Lord, untie him from the pillar, and drag him into the court of the governor's hall. Here they press upon his sacred head a twisted wreath of long and prickly thorns, crowning him in derision as a king, and sporting themselves in his sufferings. Christians, take a view of this innocent

Lamb of God, now standing in the midst of furious wolves, and bleeding for your offences.

Consider, secondly, how the insolent wretches put a reed or cane into his hand for a royal sceptre. Then they fall upon their knees and scornfully salute him with a "hail King of the Jews." By turns they buffet him and spit upon his sacred countenance, and strike him on the head with the sceptre they have given him, thus driving the thorns deeper in; while streams of blood flow from their numberless wounds. Ah! who can conceive the excruciating pains he must have undergone on this occasion! All which he bore in patience and in silence for the love of us!

Consider, thirdly, that your Saviour, in this sad condition, is scarce able to support himself through loss of blood and excess of pain! Behold him in the midst of a whole regiment of barbarous pagan soldiers, striving to outdo each other in cruelty and insolence. Our blessed Lord in the mean time preserves a perfect tranquility of soul, and a sincere charity in his heart even for these very miscreants who thus abuse him. But while you contemplate him under all these mockeries and torments, cast your eyes upwards, and behold him now sitting on his throne of glory adored by legions of angels, who invite you to join them in fervent acts of praise; and ever remember, that the more he has debased himself for your sake, the dearer he should be to you.

Conclude, from the example of your Redeemer, cheerfully to submit to the thorns which are appointed for you in this mortal pilgrimage. Pretend not to a crown of roses, to a life of worldly pleasures, while your Lord makes choice of a crown of thorns on your account.

THURSDAY, IN PASSION WEEK.

Our Lord is shown to the people.

CONSIDER, first, how Pilate, hoping that the malice of the Jews would now be fully satisfied, exhibits our blessed Lord with his crown of thorns upon his head before them, and standing with him upon an eminence, cries out, "behold the man." But alas? how vain it is to expect, that our disorderly passions will subside by indulgence! The sight of innocent blood only increased the malice of this unhappy people: they demand the death of their Redeemer with greater fury. Let their example be a warning to us, never to give way to our lawless desires.

Consider, secondly, how your Saviour presents himself to you, on this occasion. Oh! look upon him with other eyes

than did those unhappy miscreants; and, in him, *behold* the eternal word of the Father, made *man* for the love of you. Reflect to what a condition your sins and his own infinite charity have reduced the Lord of glory; and then consider, what return you will make him for all his sufferings, and for all his love. He desires no other than that of your heart; but then it must be an humble and a contrite heart; it must be a loving and an obedient heart.

Consider, thirdly, with what an affection your dear Redeemer offers up to his eternal Father all his sorrows, and all his anguish, in behalf of you and all mankind. Do you also join affectionately in this offering, and lay before him all that his Son has endured for you in the whole course of his passion. Put in your claim to that mercy, grace, and salvation, which he has so dearly purchased for you; and insist in particular upon this one favor, through his passion and death, that you may never more be disloyal to him.

Conclude with representing to your blessed Saviour all your miseries; and beg of him the remission of all your sins, through his precious blood.

FRIDAY, IN PASSION WEEK.

On the part the Blessed Virgin bore in her Son's sufferings.

CONSIDER, first, those words addressed by holy Simeon to the blessed Virgin, (Luke ii. 34, 35.) that her divine Son should "be set for a sign which should be contradicted;" and that "a sword should pierce her own soul." Yes, blessed Lady; a sword indeed, far more sharp and penetrating than any earthly steel, which can only pierce the body; whereas this sword of more than mortal anguish which thou sufferedst on occasion of the passion of thy Son, inflicts a most bitter, deep, and deadly wound, in the very midst of thy soul. Christians, see how the greatest favorites of heaven, by divine appointment meet with the greatest crosses, in this mortal pilgrimage; and think not much if your Lord chooses for you what he chose for himself, for his blessed Mother, and for all his elect.

Consider, secondly, in particular, what this virgin Lady underwent when the news was brought her, of her Son's being betrayed by Judas, apprehended, bound and dragged away in that inhuman manner before the council; and how cruelly he had been treated there after an unjust sentence was passed upon him. But as the sight usually affects us more than the hearing; so doubtless this blessed Mother was oppressed with

a far more killing grief, when the next morning she was eyewitness of all the outrages and bitter torments, which her divine Son underwent in the different stages of his passion. Ah! Christians, the whips, thorns and nails which pierced his flesh, pierced her heart with inexpressible pain and sorrow, which none surely could ever exceed, but those of her Son, "the Man of sorrows." O take pity of them both, and cease henceforward to grieve them any more by wilful sin.

Consider, thirdly, how her tender heart must have been affected, when she followed her blessed Son on his last journey to Mount Calvary, bearing his cross on his mangled shoulders, and marking the way with his sacred blood! But what a sea of sorrows overwhelmed her soul, when she heard the strokes of the hammer driving the nails into his hands and feet; when she beheld him hanging in the air supported by his wounds; when standing near the cross, she saw the extremity of the torture he there endured, contemplated the multitude and variety of his sufferings; heard his last dying words, and saw him give up the ghost! How truly might she then cry out with the prophet, "O all you that pass by the way, attend and see, if there be sorrow like to my sorrow," (Lament. i. 12.)

Conclude to imitate the virtues, of which the most holy Mother of God has given us an illustrious example, under this martyrdom of grief; namely, her great fortitude, her patience and perfect conformity to the will of God, her lively faith and hope. These must support you also under all your crosses.

SATURDAY, IN PASSION WEEK.

Our Lord is condemned to the cross.

CONSIDER, first, that the Jews perceiving Pilate's desire to release our blessed Redeemer, told him that if he set him at liberty, he could not be a friend to Cæsar, (John xix, 12.) Pilate by way of exculpating himself washes his hands and cries out: "I am innocent of the blood of this man, look you to it," (Matthew xxvii. 24;) as if this empty ceremony and verbal declaration could clear him, in the sight of the just judge, from the guilt of shedding innocent blood. But if Pilate, who on this occasion acted in some measure through compulsion, was notwithstanding highly criminal, how much more inexcusable was the malice of the Jews, who impiously exclaimed: "His blood be upon us and upon our children?"

Consider, secondly, that it was not so much the tumultuous cries of a Jewish rabble, as the voice of our crying sins, that called for the death of the Son of God. Nor could the sen-

tence of a wicked judge have brought on his crucifixion, had not he freely chosen this kind of death for the expiation of our guilt. Our sins alone were the true cause of all his sufferings; and his own tender charity alone subjected him to the humiliations of his passion, in order to rescue us from hell. Do thou, my soul, for ever bless that infinite charity of thy Saviour.

Consider, thirdly, that our dear Redeemer, being infinitely holy, could not but abhor the crime of Pilate in this most iniquitous sentence, though he suffered it; but as to the judgment and sentence of his Heavenly Father who required of him so great an atonement for our sins, this he embraced as most holy and just; he bowed down and adored it with the most perfect resignation: to teach us and all who wish to be his disciples, to distinguish on such occasions between the injustice of man and the justice of God; and to receive our sufferings, from whatever hand they come and how unjustly severe, as highly just on the part of God, punishing us by their means for our transgressions.

Conclude, in return, to make an offering of your whole self both to the Father and the Son; to the Father, for giving up his only begotten Son for your ransom; and to the Son, for lovingly embracing the pangs of death for your salvation.

N. B. The course of the Meditations upon the passion is interrupted on Palm Sunday, to attend to the mystery of the day.

PALM SUNDAY.

Our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

CONSIDER, first, that the time when our Saviour was to offer himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, drawing near, he was pleased to come to the place where he was to complete this sacrifice. And as, in order to fulfil the ancient figures, he chose that very night for the institution of the passover of the new Law, which was set aside for the immolation of the paschal Lamb in the old Law; and that very day for the Redemption of the world, on which God's people had formerly been redeemed from their Egyptian bondage; so he was pleased to make his entry into Jerusalem in order to his sacrifice, on the very day on which by the appointment of the law, (Exodus xii. 3.) the lamb which was to be sacrificed for the passover, was brought to town. Contemplate in this instance the greatness of that love and charity for you, which made your Saviour conceal the glory of his birth in the obscurity of a poor stable at Bethlehem, whilst he chose for the ignominy of his passion

the great theatre of Jerusalem, and the paschal time when the whole nation of the Jews was assembled!

Consider, secondly, how the people in solemn procession met our Lord with palm branches in their hands, as an emblem of his victory over the prince of darkness; and accompanied him with joyful acclamations, to honor him as their King and Messiah; strewing their garments in the way, and singing his praises. But alas! this same people who now so highly honored our blessed Redeemer, five days after cried out; "away with him, away with him: crucify him, crucify him!"

Consider, thirdly, how our Lord upon this occasion weeps over the unhappy Jerusalem, and over every impenitent soul that, like Jerusalem, takes no notice in "this her day, of the things that are for her peace; but lets slip the time of her visitation," (Luke xix. 42, 43.) This affects him far more than the triumph with which he is attended to the city.

Conclude to admire both the great charity and the wonderful humility of your Saviour: he did not disdain to ride upon an ass! "Rejoice O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King will come to thee, the Just, and the Saviour: he is poor, and riding upon an ass," &c., (Zach. ix. 9.)

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Our Saviour carries his cross.

CONSIDER, first, how our blessed Lord, after sentence of death was pronounced against him by his wicked judge, is immediately hurried to execution; and, as Isaac formerly carried the wood upon which he was to be offered in sacrifice; so our dear Redeemer is pleased himself to carry the cross, which he is now to consecrate with his precious blood. Ah! how affectionately does he embrace this cross; destined to be the happy instrument of our redemption, the altar of his sacrifice, the eternal monument of his love. O my soul, what are thy sentiments with regard to the cross of Christ? Thou must embrace the cross with Jesus, if thou desirest to reign with Jesus.

Consider, secondly, the circumstances of this last journey of your Lord, and mark this his most painful procession. A crier leads the way, publishing his pretended crimes and blasphemies: then follow the soldiers and executioners, with ropes, hammers, nails and the other instruments of his death. He is attended with a thief on each hand, and surrounded with a multitude of his enemies, loading him with curses and reproaches. Do you also attend your Saviour on this melancholy occasion: offer him what service you can to ease him of some part of his burden; or at least weep over him, with the good wo-

men that followed him: but take notice of his admonishing them, rather to weep for themselves and for their children.

Consider, thirdly, how our Lord, having for some time with unspeakable pain and labor carried his cross through the streets, sinks at last under the burden, quite spent, and fainting through loss of blood. Not to delay the execution, Simon of Cyrene who was passing that way, is compelled to take up the cross, and thus to ease our Lord of part of his burden. But alas! who shall ease him of any part of that other load infinitely more insupportable, which his heavenly Father has laid upon him, of the sins of the whole world! Ah! lament the share you yourself have had in adding to your Saviour's sorrows; and detest your crimes.

Conclude in imitation of our dear Redeemer, to take up your own cross with perfect resignation to your heavenly Father's will; and like him be "obedient unto death."

TUESDAY, IN HOLY WEEK.

Our Saviour is nailed to the cross.

CONSIDER, first, how, upon our Redeemer's arrival at Mount Calvary, quite spent as he is, and tormented with violent thirst, he is presented by his enemies with a draught of gall and vinegar. Then, after stripping him of his clothes, which now stick fast to his wounded body, they order him to lie down upon the cross. He obeys without resistance or demur, offering himself to his eternal Father a sacrifice for our sins; and, with infinite charity, he prays for his very executioners!

Consider, secondly, how one of these barbarians fixes the point of a large sharp nail upon the palm of one of our Saviour's hands, and violently drives it with his hammer into the tender flesh, forcing its way with inexpressible torment through the nerves, sinews, and bones, of which the hand is composed, deep into the hard wood of the cross. After this, his other hand, and both his sacred feet, are, in like manner, violently nailed to the cross. Thus is verified that of the prophet, (Psalms xxi.) "They have dug my hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones:" which were, in effect, so much drawn from their places, and in a manner disjointed, that they might be numbered. Ah, sweet Saviour! who can conceive the extremity of this torment!

Consider, thirdly, what tortures our blessed Redeemer must have suffered in his whole body, when they dragged the cross along the ground to the hole prepared for it, and raised him with ropes and pulleys above the heads of the people. Who

can think without horror; how painful every motion must have been, to a body supported by its own ghastly wounds! Yet such was the malice of the enemies of our Saviour, that instead of compassion at the sight of his torments, they shout, and triumph, and shake their heads at him, rejoicing at all his sufferings. Christians, while you detest this Jewish malice, take care you have no part in it by obstinacy in sin, on account of which alone he died.

Conclude henceforward to lament your crimes, and to love, with all affection, your dear Redeemer, who shed his blood for the love of you.

WEDNESDAY, IN HOLY WEEK.

On the sufferings of our Saviour upon the cross.

CONSIDER, first, and contemplate at leisure, the multitude and variety of our Lord's sufferings upon the cross. Draw near, and sit down under the shadow of your true lover, with a longing desire to become his scholar in the school of love. And first, as to his sacred body: "from the sole of the feet to the top of the head, there is no soundness therein." O how painful is this hard bed of the cross, to a body thus torn and mangled! how uneasy this pillow of a crown of thorns to his wounded head! But, above all, remark those four streams of blood, flowing from the most painful wounds of his hands and feet; and consider how the whole weight of the body, hanging by those gross nails which pierce the nerves and bones, whilst it naturally sinks downwards, continually rends his wounds and increases his pains.

Consider, secondly, what grievous sufferings he endures in his soul. Witness his inexpressible horror for the sins of the world, all now laid upon him, and oppressing his soul with their infinite weight: his deep sense of those blasphemies he hears uttered against the Deity; and the contempt which is shown for his person and his divine truths. Witness the anguish of his soul, to see the hardness, the blindness and reprobation of his once chosen people, and the eternal damnation of so many millions of souls for whom he is now offering himself in sacrifice. Add to this, his grief to see the unspeakable desolation of his blessed Mother, and of all his friends; and himself given up to the will and pleasure of his enemies, and deprived of all comfort from his heavenly Father: "Father," says he, "why hast thou forsaken me?"

Consider, thirdly, that our blessed Lord is pleased to suffer every other way, by which any mortal can suffer in this life; in his reputation, by outrageous calumnies and aspersions; in his

goods by being stript of his clothes, (the all he had in this world,) and exposed to the insults of the rabble. He suffers from all sorts of people; Jews and Gentiles, great and small, priests and laity. His enemies revile and laugh him to scorn; his friends are ashamed of him, and are afraid of undergoing the like treatment. His eyes see nothing but what may add to his anguish; his ears are entertained with nothing but reproach and blasphemies; his palate is afflicted with a mortal thirst; and his own body, by its weight, is a most grievous torment to him.

Conclude to station yourself at the foot of the cross, and contemplate in the sufferings of your Saviour the enormity of your guilt, in order to detest it; and the goodness of your God, in order that you may love him more and more.

HOLY THURSDAY.

On our Saviour's preaching from the cross.

CONSIDER, first, that the whole life and doctrine of Christ was a continual lesson to his followers. But mark in particular the sermon which he preaches to us all from the pulpit of the cross; how loudly he there condemns all the illusions of self-love, with all the maxims and practices of the world, and the unhappy attachment of worldlings to their carnal and sensual affections. O! remember, that what he suffers is all by his own choice; and this, not only to expiate our sins, but also to undeceive us in the perverse judgment we make of things; and to teach us to embrace what he embraces, to despise what he despises, to condemn what he condemns. Learn of him, at the foot of his cross, to overcome your pride by the great example he sets of voluntary humiliation; your love of the world by his voluntary poverty and state of total desolation; your love of pleasure by his most bitter torments supported for your sake.

Consider, secondly, that whoever desires to become a perfect christian, must learn of his dying Saviour to make an offering of himself without reserve, together with him and through his hands, that it may be acceptable to the eternal Father. He must make this offering every day, and oftentimes in the day; to do for him whatever he pleases, and to suffer as he pleases. He must dedicate himself eternally to his love, and resolve to die a thousand deaths, rather than transgress the commandments of his God.

Consider, thirdly, the particular lessons which our Lord gives us in his last expiring words, upon the cross; 1. "Of perfect charity" to our enemies by his own example: "Father forgive

them; for they know not what they do." 2. Of mercy and compassion for sinners by that consoling promise to the penitent thief, "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." 3. Of "duty to our parents" by recommending his virgin Mother to the care of his beloved disciple, and of a filial devotion to her; for as we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, she is the spiritual mother of us all. "Woman," says he, "behold thy son; behold thy mother." 4. Of a vehement thirst of our neighbor's salvation, expressed in his own regard by this word, "I thirst." 5. Of fervent prayer under anguish and desolation: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" 6. Of perseverance to the end, till the work of our salvation is completed, by that word of his, "it is consummated." 7. Of committing ourselves both in life and death, by perfect resignation, into the hands of God, after his great example: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Conclude daily to frequent this school of the cross; and there to learn in particular, a resolute conformity and obedience to the law of God, like your Saviour, "even unto death."

GOOD FRIDAY.

On our Saviour's death upon the cross.

CONSIDER, first, how our Lord having uttered aloud these his last words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," bows his head in perfect submission to his Father's will, and expires. Stand astonished, O my soul, in the contemplation of this mystery, that life itself should die to deliver thee from a second death, and to impart to thee eternal life! Oh! consider well who this is that hangs here dead before thy eyes? The Word, the Wisdom of the Father, the Son of the eternal God; the Lord of glory, the King of Kings, the great Creator of heaven and earth! Draw near and cast thyself down at the foot of the cross, in acts of faith, hope, and love, and of contrition for thy sins: offer thyself to thy Saviour to be his both in life and death, in time and eternity.

Consider, secondly, how all nature loudly proclaims our suffering Redeemer her King, and her God. The sun withdraws his light for the three whole hours that he hangs upon the cross: at his death the whole earth trembles; the rocks are split; the monuments are opened; the dead arise; the veil of the temple, which hangs before the inward sanctuary, is rent from top to bottom, to show that the law and its figures are all now accomplished, and that the sanctuary of heaven is laid open. Already he begins from the cross to verify what he had said, (John xii. 32.) "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will

draw all things to myself." By this miraculous attraction one of the thieves who were crucified with him, and the captain of the soldiers who assisted at the execution, were suddenly converted; and "all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, return striking their breasts," (Luke xxiii. 48.) Sweet Jesus, let my poor heart share also in this mercy.

Consider, thirdly, how our Lord by his death triumphs over all his enemies. He casts out Satan, the ruler of this wicked world, and binds him in chains, by greatly abridging his power; he judges and condemns the world with all its favorite maxims: he exposes and pulls down human pride; shows the folly of worldly wisdom, and sets up his victorious standard of the cross for all nations, under which his true soldiers shall fight and triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil; till they finally arrive at the crown of life, purchased for them by his blood.

Conclude to celebrate on this day, your Saviour's victory over sin and hell. Adore him most profoundly under all the ignominy of his cross; and embrace affectionately the sacred wounds of his passion. Behold how lovingly, with his head bowed down, he offers to sinners the kiss of peace.

HOLY SATURDAY.

On our Saviour's burial.

CONSIDER, first, how, after our Lord had expired upon the cross, one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear, making a wide and deep wound from which there issued forth blood and water, to wash and cleanse away our sins. By this mysterious blood and water, are figured the heavenly sacraments, which issue from our Saviour's wounds; inasmuch as they derive all their virtue from his sacred passion; but especially the sacrament of his body and blood, and that of the sacred laver of baptism. Behold also, how our second Adam, being now cast into the deep sleep of death, his side is opened to form from thence his holy Catholic church, designed to be his everlasting spouse.

Consider, secondly, how Joseph of Arimathea, having obtained leave of Pilate, unnails the sacred body in order to its decent burial, and is joined in this last duty by St. John and Nicodemus, with other disciples of our Lord. Do you also in spirit offer your service upon this occasion: receive into your arms the dead corpse of your Redeemer, and lay it on the sacred lap of his virgin Mother; and learn from her whole com-

portment at this melancholy ceremony, a most tender devotion towards the passion of her divine Son.

Consider, thirdly, how our Lord, while lying in his monument, verifies that of the Psalmist, (Ps. lxxxvii,) "I am counted among them that go down into the pit: I am become as a man without help, free among the dead. Like the slain sleeping in the sepulchres, whom thou rememberest no more. They have laid me in the lower pit; in the dark, and in the shadow of death. Thou hast put away my acquaintance far from me," &c. Yes, my soul, thy Saviour lies now shut up in a lonesome monument, in darkness, like one dead for always, and as such is left and forsaken by his living friends. See thou leave him not: but stay with him and watch at his sepulchre in prayer. Weep there over him with tears of compassion for his sufferings, of sorrow for thy sins, and of love for his infinite goodness to thee.

Conclude to keep yourself always near your Saviour by daily meditating on his life and death; and you may confidently hope he will always abide with you, both in life and death.

EASTER-SUNDAY.

On the resurrection of our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, that the soul of our dear Redeemer immediately after his death descended into the lower parts of the earth, to visit and comfort the spirits of the just, and to change their prison by his presence into a paradise of delights. How happy and how joyful a day was this to all the patriarchs and prophets! How glorious was the sight of his triumph over the powers of darkness, and the near prospect of eternal bliss, from which they had been so long excluded by the sin of our first parents. The Jews in the mean while, secure the monument, and place guards to prevent, as they say, the disciples from stealing away the body of our Saviour. This malicious industry of theirs only serves to put our Lord's resurrection beyond dispute. For "there is no wisdom; there is no prudence; there is no counsel against the Lord," (Prov. xxi. 30.)

Consider, secondly, that early in the morning on Easter Sunday, being *the third day*, appointed by the scriptures for our Lord's resurrection, his soul returns in triumph into his sacred body; imparts to it a new and immortal life, and clothes it with all the glorious qualities decreed for the bodies of the saints, in a super-eminent degree: and so brings it forth without resistance through the monument, hewn in a rock, and covered with a very great stone, unperceived by the guards, who were not worthy to see him in this glorious state. Yet,

that they and all the world might know he was risen indeed, they felt a great earthquake; and an angel visibly descending from heaven, removed the stone which covered the entrance of the monument, and sat down upon it. The guards became as dead men; and when they recovered from their swoon, they ran into the city, publishing the wonders they had seen; till the chief priests and elders bribed them with a sum of money.

Consider, thirdly, those words of the Psalmist, applied by the Church in the office of this day to the resurrection of our Lord: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice therein." (Ps. cxvii.) Yes, christian souls; if you have taken part in the sufferings of your Redeemer, by compassion and sorrow for the outrages and insults he endured in his passion, it is just you should rejoice now the scene is changed. Your best friend, your true lover, your dear father, your king, your Lord, and your God, is risen again; and this is the day of his triumph.

Conclude with a resolution to imitate his death by dying to your sins, that you may also imitate his resurrection, and walk henceforward in the newness of life.

EASTER-MONDAY.

What we are to learn from the resurrection of Christ.

CONSIDER, first, that, according to the doctrine of the apostle, (Rom. iv. 25.,) "Christ was delivered up to death for our sins; and rose again for our justification." For his rising from the dead was to be the model of our resurrection from the death of sin. We must therefore imitate our Lord's resurrection by rising *verily* and *indeed*, and not in appearance only. Alas! how many at Easter pretend to rise again with Christ, by frequenting the sacraments according to the custom of christians at this season; but do not rise again in reality, because they do not heartily renounce their sins.

Consider, secondly, that when Christ rose again from the dead, he presently quitted his monument, and retained nothing at all of death; to teach us, that if we would rise with him to the purpose, we must also quit our winding-sheets, and all the appurtenances of death; by renouncing bad company and the dangerous occasions of sin, and by breaking the force of all former bad habits, and striving to fix our affections in heaven. "If you be risen with CHRIST, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, and not the things that are upon earth," (Colos. chap. iii.)

Consider, thirdly, that "CHRIST rising again from the dead,

dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over him," (Rom. vi. 9.) So that, if we would imitate his resurrection, we must "reckon ourselves," henceforward, "to be dead to sin, but alive to God, in Christ Jesus our Lord," (v. 11.) Ah, christians! if you are truly risen from the death of sin, dread above all evils a second death, by relapsing again into mortal sin.

Conclude to imitate, in all these particulars, the resurrection of our Lord. Be diligent in all your religious duties; be constant and fervent in prayer; and carefully avoid all dangerous occasions.

EASTER-TUESDAY.

Our Lord appears to his disciples after his resurrection.

CONSIDER, first, how our Lord was pleased to comfort his blessed mother and his afflicted disciples, by appearing to them immediately after his resurrection. As to his blessed mother, though the gospel is silent, we cannot doubt but she was favored with an early visit; that as she loved him most, and partook more than any other in the sorrows of his passion, so she might also in the joy of his resurrection. The good women, who went early in the morning to the monument, to perfume the body of our Lord, were likewise favored—first, with a vision of angels, and then with the sight of Christ himself. They had been at a loss how to get the stone removed from the monument; for it was "exceeding great:" but on their arrival, it was already removed to their hands: to teach us, that if we continue constant in our good resolutions, God will take away the obstacles we apprehend, or enable us to surmount them.

Consider, secondly, that our dear Redeemer, to encourage penitent sinners, honored Magdalene amongst women, and Peter amongst men, with his first visits. Magdalene, from the time of her conversion, had constantly attended our Lord: she followed him even to the cross; and after the repose of the sabbath, she was up before light, and was the first at the monument, with her perfumes. When she found him not, she hastened to tell the apostles, that the body was taken away. Peter and John, on their arrival, finding only the linen cloths without the body, returned: but Magdalene staid behind, weeping and lamenting that she could not find HIM whom her soul loved—till at length she saw his heavenly messengers, and shortly after HIMSELF in person; and was sent by him as an apostle to the apostles themselves, with the joyful tidings of his resurrection.

Consider, thirdly, that Peter, who, from his fall, had continually bewailed his misfortune, was the first among the apostles, favored with the sight of our Lord, (1 Cor. xv. 5., and Luke xxiv. 34.) He was struck with the most lively sentiments of repentance for his crime, mixed with a holy joy at the sight of his divine master, now risen from the dead; and was by him most tenderly received to mercy. Moreover, to show the unspeakable bounty of our Lord to repenting sinners, a little while after (John xxi.) he was pleased to advance him to the supreme pastoral charge over all his flock, and to promise him the glory of *following him*, even to the death of the cross—all in consequence of that ardent love, of which he thrice required the profession, [*“lovest thou me more than these?”*] in opposition to his three denials.

Conclude, if ever you have denied your Saviour by word or deed, to return now to him by repentance and love; and *“though your sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow,”* (Isa. i. 18.)

EASTER-WEDNESDAY.

Our Lord appears to the disciples going to Emmaus,
[Luke xxiv 11.]

CONSIDER, first, that while two of the disciples, on the day of our Lord's resurrection, were discoursing together concerning him, on their way to Emmaus, he overtook them in the way, and joined their company. After reprimanding their doubts and slowness of belief, he explained to them the scriptures relating to his passion and resurrection, and enkindled in their hearts the fire of devotion. We see in this instance the great advantage of pious conversation, such especially as has Christ for its subject: it even draws him down from heaven into our company.

Consider, secondly, that these disciples, who took him for a traveller, at length *“knew him in the breaking of bread”*—to teach us that there is no better way to attain the perfect knowledge and love of God, than a worthy partaking of the bread of life in the blessed Eucharist. St. Gregory observes, that while they only heard his words, they were not sufficiently enlightened to know him: but quickly knew him in fulfilling his commandments, by the exercise of hospitality and charity. So, we must practise, to the best of our power, what we know already of his heavenly will, in order to obtain a fuller knowledge of his divine law.

Consider, thirdly, how these disciples took notice that *“their heart was burning within them, while they were in the com-*

pany of our Lord, and enjoyed his heavenly conversation, (Luke xxiv. 32.) My soul, dost thou desire to experience something of these sacred flames? Seek it in the company and conversation of Christ. Alas! the reason why thou art so lukewarm, or rather downright cold in thy devotions, is, the continual dissipation of thy thoughts at other times, and thy love of worldly amusements.

Conclude to listen to the voice of your beloved in the interior of your soul. There is the school of divine love.

EASTER-THURSDAY.

Our Lord's manifestation to all the apostles. [Luke xxiv. John xx.]

CONSIDER, first, that on the evening of the same day of the resurrection, the disciples being assembled together, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, our Saviour came in, "and stood in the midst of them, and said: peace be to you." Then he showed them the wounds of his hands, and feet, and side. Admire the qualities of his glorious body, which like a spirit passes through the doors, and yet shows itself to be true and palpable flesh. Christians now no longer feel their Saviour's wounds, like Thomas; nor lodge their hand in his side: but they have him still no less really present with them in the eucharist. Let this suffice: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed," (John xx. 29.)

Consider, secondly, that after our Lord had said again to his disciples; "peace be to you: as my Father hath sent me, I also send you," breathing upon them he said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins your shall forgive they are forgiven unto them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." See how ample is this authority, which he imparts to his apostles and their lawful successors, the pastors of his true church. As his Heavenly Father sent him, even so he sends them, furnished with all spiritual power for the rule of his Church, and the ministry of his word and of the sacraments. To them he has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven: to them he orders all to have recourse.

Consider, thirdly, the import of the passage above rehearsed. By these words our Lord was pleased to commission his disciples and their lawful successors to sit as judges in the court of conscience, and to pass sentence either in favor of penitent sinners, to loose them from their sins by absolution, or to bind them as the case should require, by censures, penances, or delay of absolution. Give thanks for this sacred institution, by which you may obtain pardon of your sins, upon the easy con-

ditions of an humble and secret confession, joined with a hearty repentance.

Conclude to acknowledge with gratitude those precious advantages, which our Lord at his resurrection entailed upon his Church for ever, particularly that of his perpetual presence, promised in the three last verses of St. Matthew : "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, &c. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

EASTER-FRIDAY.

On the peace of a Christian.

CONSIDER, first, the nature of that *peace*, which our blessed Saviour so repeatedly bequeathed to his disciples. It is not that peace which the world pretends to give; false and deceitful like itself: but the "peace of God which surpasseth all understanding," (Philip. iv. 7.) A threefold peace, with God, with our neighbor, and within ourselves. Whosoever desires any degree of happiness either here or hereafter, must keep an inviolable peace with God. For how can there be any peace of mind or solid content, where this is wanting? "Who hath resisted God and hath had peace," (Job ix. 4.) "There is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord God," (Isai. lvii. 21.)

Consider, secondly, that as without charity for all mankind there can be no true love of God; so if we do not "follow peace with all men," (Heb. xii. 14.) and endeavor to "keep peace with all men," (Rom. xii. 18.) we cannot be at peace with God. We must therefore avoid all animosity and rancor, all discord and contention, all malice and envy; bear with patience every provocation, and overcome evil with good. How amiable is this character of the peaceable christian!

Consider, thirdly, that, in order to be at peace with ourselves, we must have our affections well regulated, and our inordinate desires restrained: we must banish all excessive eagerness; all sadness and melancholy; scrupulous fears, anxieties and uneasiness about the things of the world; and conform ourselves in all things to the holy will of God. Practice these lessons, my soul, and thou shalt enjoy a solid peace.

Conclude ever to aim at this threefold peace; and resolutely surmount whatever obstacle may impede its attainment.

EASTER-SATURDAY.

On perseverance in good.

CONSIDER, first, that it will avail you nothing to have made a good beginning at this holy time, if after having been "enlightened, and having tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partaker of the Holy Ghost," (Heb. vi. 4.) you should quickly *fall away* and return to your former state of sin. To prevent this, you must labor to establish in your soul a horror of this dreadful evil and all its dangerous occasions; a lively repentance for what is past, and a grateful sense of the infinite mercy of God, with a fixed resolution of being always loyal to him; of the assured expectation of an eternal reward: "be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee the crown of life, says our Lord," (Apoc. ii. 10.)

Consider, secondly, that in order more easily to persevere in good, we must renounce an idle life as the mother of all evil, and regulate our time and all our daily exercises: we must be constant in the performance of our duties, and in frequenting the sacraments; and do our ordinary actions with a pure intention of pleasing God. For sanctity consists not in extraordinary actions, but in doing our ordinary ones extraordinarily well.

Consider, thirdly; that the mortification of our passions, and constant self-denial, are the sovereign means of perseverance: therefore every christian must study well to know himself and the true state of his own interior, and to discover what passions are most prevalent in his soul, in order to subdue them. This warfare is one of the most essential duties of every disciple of Jesus Christ: no one will be crowned by him, who has not first subdued himself.

Conclude, moreover, to beg of God in your daily prayers, that he would be your keeper, and preserve you till death from all grievous sin.

LOW SUNDAY.*On the sacrament of baptism.*

CONSIDER, first, that baptism is to our souls the gate of life, an introduction to all that is good. It is called by the apostle (Tit. iii. 5.) "the laver of regeneration, and the renovation of the Holy Ghost"—because we are cleansed from original sin, which we inherited from our first parent Adam; and are sanctified in this sacrament by "the laver of water in the word of

life," (Eph. v. 26.) in virtue of the blood of Christ, here applied to our souls; and we are "born again of water and the Holy Ghost," (John iii. 5.) to a new and everlasting life; and are made children of the living God, and heirs of his eternal kingdom.

Consider, secondly, that we are dedicated and consecrated to God by this sacrament, to be eternally devoted to his divine love. "We who before were not his people, are now the people of God," [1 Peter ii. 10.] "A chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, called out of darkness into the admirable light" of Christ.

Consider, thirdly, that "all who are baptised in Christ Jesus, are baptised in his death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we may also walk in newness of life," [Romans vi. 3, 4.] Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer," [verse 6.] So that henceforward, in consequence of our baptism, we must "reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord," [verse 11.] And therefore, "as Christ, rising again from the dead, dies now no more; as death shall no more have dominion over him," [verse 9,] so now we must die no more by sin; sin must no more have dominion over us.

Conclude ever to bear in mind both the dignity and the obligations of your baptism; and consequently, to imitate, by renouncing sin and rising to a life of grace, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

MONDAY AFTER LOW SUNDAY.

On the covenant of baptism.

CONSIDER, first, that in baptism we make a solemn covenant with God. He, on his part, adopts us for his children and heirs to his eternal kingdom: but all this is upon articles, to which we bind ourselves by the strongest engagements and vows. The first of these is, ever to adhere to him with a strong and constant faith of all his divine truths—a faith, not like that of those "who make profession of knowing God, but deny him in their works," [Titus i.]—but a faith that "worketh by charity," [Gallitians v. 6.] A faith which sheweth itself in the conduct of our life: for "the just man liveth by faith."

Consider, secondly, that another article of our baptismal covenant was, to wage a perpetual war with Satan; to renounce him for ever, with all his works of darkness and sin;

all his pomps of worldly pride and vain glory; and to adhere for ever to God by a strict and faithful allegiance to his divine majesty. Alas, how ill have we hitherto complied with these essential obligations!

Consider, thirdly, that we also engage ourselves strictly to observe the whole law, and the commandments of our heavenly Father, our King, and our God; but more especially the great commandment of "loving him with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with our whole mind, and with our whole strength"—and of "loving our neighbor as ourselves." Ah, let us not unnaturally spurn the just commands of the Parent of all nature, nor impiously set aside our most sacred engagements.

Conclude, henceforward at least carefully to observe your baptismal vows; and since God claims your whole being upon all possible titles, give yourself to him without reserve, in time and eternity.

TUESDAY AFTER LOW SUNDAY.

On the ceremonies of baptism.

CONSIDER, first, that the ceremonies used by the Catholic church at baptism, are very ancient, and significative of its effects, and, of the duties incumbent on the receivers. The profession of *faith*, and a desire of the sacrament; the promise to observe the commandments; the sign of the cross upon the forehead and the breast; the *salt*, expressive of that christian prudence and discretion, and the seasoning of divine grace, which ought to attend all our actions: the exorcisms and prayers; the application of *spittle* to the ears and nostrils, in imitation of our Lord, [Mark vii. 33.] are all of this nature, and full of instruction.

Consider, secondly, that at baptism we renounce Satan and all his works and pomps, and declare an eternal war against this mortal enemy of God and man. We are anointed with consecrated oil on the breast and between the shoulders, to signify the inward unction of divine grace, to strengthen us to love God and keep the commandments, and to bear, in a christian manner, all the labors and adversities of this mortal pilgrimage. Immediately after baptism, we are anointed with the holy chrism on the top of the head, to signify our being now incorporated with Christ, the great *Anointed* of the Lord, and consecrated to God for ever. In consequence of which, all christians are called by St. Peter a *kingly priesthood*: as, in the old law, God anointed his priests, prophets, kings, and martyrs.

Consider, thirdly, that after baptism, by the white linen which the priest puts upon our head, (instead of the white garment anciently worn on this occasion,) and by the lighted taper which we receive from him, we are reminded of our strict obligation to lead a holy and innocent life—to hold forth the light of faith, to the edification of all men—and to keep it always burning with divine charity, till we meet our Lord in his heavenly kingdom.

Conclude faithfully to answer the obligations of your baptism; and never stain the spiritual robe of innocence you then received, by wilful sin.

WEDNESDAY AFTER LOW SUNDAY.

On the evil of falling from the grace of baptism.

CONSIDER, first, how dismal is that fall, by which, in a moment, we lose all the dignity, all the advantages, all the treasures conferred on us in baptism. A dreadful fall, indeed! by which the poor soul falls from heaven to hell, from being a child of God, to be a slave of Satan, and of sin which is even worse than Satan; from being the spouse of Christ, to be the prostitute of unclean spirits; from being the temple of the Holy Ghost, to be the habitation of the most Wicked One!

Consider, secondly, the folly and madness of such an exchange! Alas! the soul in acting thus, forfeits all her good at present, and all her title to happiness, either in time or eternity, for mere delusion and eternal misery. Ah, unhappy sinner! open thine eyes, and see the wretched bargain thou hast made. To part with thy God, and thy ALL, for something so base, so vile, so empty, and so transient! Before thy sin, heaven was thine;—God himself was thine!—But now thou hast parted with thy God, thou hast exchanged heaven for hell, and thou standest upon the very brink of a miserable eternity.

Consider, thirdly, the enormous treason which the soul commits when she falls from the grace of baptism. She renounces her allegiance to her King and God: she rebels against him, to follow Satan: she even drives him from his throne which he held within her: she expels him out of his temple, to introduce his enemy: she sets up an idol in the house of God; violates all her solemn vows; treads under foot the precious blood of her Redeemer; and, as much as in her lies, she crucifies him again.

Conclude, if your conscience charge you with this enormous guilt, incurred by every mortal sin, to bewail your crime and

misfortune for the remainder of your life; and daily renew your resolution of avoiding sin in future.

THURSDAY AFTER LOW SUNDAY.

On the Theological Virtues.

CONSIDER, first, that we must worship God "in spirit and in truth," (John iv. 24.) That is; we must join with the external adoration and praise, prayer and sacrifice which is offered in the Church of Christ, the internal homage of our heart, and the pure worship of faith, hope, and charity. Embrace then, with your whole soul, these three divine virtues. There is no other way to heaven and a happy eternity.

Consider, secondly, that these virtues are called *theological* and *divine*, from their immediate relation to God. Thus *faith* believes in him as the sovereign truth, and obliges the soul to give a firm assent to all the truths revealed by him, however incomprehensible to our weakness. *Hope* puts her whole trust in him, as the infinite source of all good; and raises the soul to a lively expectation of mercy, grace, and salvation from him, confiding in his almighty power and goodness, mercy and promises, and in the precious blood of his Son. *Charity* or *Divine love* embraces him above all things, and loves him for his own infinite goodness, and all others made after his image and likeness, for his sake.

Consider, thirdly, that we must make frequent acts of these divine virtues. The soul which does not often employ her thoughts upon the great truths of God and eternity, quickly forgets both God and herself; and thus, while her faith is asleep, she is exposed to the most dreadful evils. *Hope* easily degenerates into presumption, without the frequent exercise of prayer and consideration. And *charity* or *love*, which is of the nature of fire, must needs die away, if it be not kept alive by frequent exercise. Thus, as the just man lives by faith, according to the scripture; so he must also live by *hope* and by *charity*.

Conclude frequently to praise these divine virtues. They are best learned and improved by meditation.

FRIDAY AFTER LOW SUNDAY.

On faith.

CONSIDER, first, that "without faith it is impossible to please God," (Heb. xi. 6.) This virtue is the ground-work and first

foundation of all our good: here we must begin the work of our salvation. But what is faith? Not, as some vainly imagine, a presumptuous confidence of the pardon of our sins, and of our justification and eternal beatitude; excluding that humble fear with which the christian is taught to work out his salvation, (Phil. ii. 12.) (Rom. xi. 20.) but a firm belief of all those things which God has revealed or promised: a bowing down of the soul to all that God has taught, however exalted above our understanding. "Faith," says the apostle, (Heb. xi. 1.) "is the substance," that is the strong foundation, "of things to be hoped for; the evidence of things that are not seen."

Consider, secondly, that the merit of faith which makes it so acceptable to God, consists in this; it pulls down the pride of man by captivating his understanding, and obliges it to believe what it cannot see, to adore what it cannot conceive, and to submit to truths which it cannot comprehend. Man fell from his original justice by proudly pretending to a more extensive knowledge than God was pleased to allow him, which might make him "like to God," (Gen. iii. 5.) And therefore God justly requires we should return to him by the sacrifice of what is most dear to our pride, namely, the liberty we are so fond of, of thinking as we please in all matters, without restraint or control.

Consider, thirdly, that the faith without which we can neither please God here, nor be happy with him hereafter, must be *Catholic*, that is *universal*; it must extend to all revealed truths without exception. For as they all equally come from God by divine revelation, are all recommended to our belief by the same authority of the Church of God, and are all supported by those strong testimonies and evidences by which the scripture and christianity itself are supported; it would be calling in question the Divine veracity to dispute the truth of any one article duly proposed by the Church; it would be in effect the utter loss of divine faith, because it would be believing by humor and not by divine authority; agreeably to that of St. James: "He that offends in one point becomes guilty of all;" because he is a rebel against the *truth* by which they are all delivered.

Conclude to lay this strong foundation of faith, if you hope to raise within you a spiritual building to Almighty God. To build upon any other foundation, is to build upon sand.

SATURDAY AFTER LOW SUNDAY.

On the grounds of faith.

CONSIDER, first, that divine faith is always grounded upon God's unerring truth, and believes each article precisely because God has taught it, who is truth itself. Whoever assents upon any other motive, may have an *opinion* indeed, of heavenly truths, or a *human faith* concerning them, but falls short of *divine faith*, which wholly rests upon the truth of God; well assured that what God has taught must needs be true.

Consider, secondly, that though the only *proper* motive upon which a christian believes with divine faith the truths of religion, be *divine revelation*, or the *word* and *testimony* of God, either contained in Scripture or conveyed down by *tradition*: yet, as this testimony or revelation first delivered to the saints, must bring with it evidence sufficient to convince us that God has spoken indeed, and has revealed these truths; he has been pleased to set such marks upon the truths which come from him, as may fully satisfy all sincere seekers and lovers of truth, that they come indeed from his divine majesty; and consequently, it would be highly unreasonable for any person not to yield that assent of faith, which is due to divine truths. Of this nature are all the prophecies and miracles, and other arguments of credility upon which the christian religion is grounded, together with the innumerable tokens of divine favor, which recommend to us that illustrious society of the Catholic Church of Christ, which bears testimony to all these truths.

Consider, thirdly, then, some of the many strong and weighty arguments and motives, which enforce the testimony and authority of this Church of Christ. This great and most ancient society is, and has been these eighteen hundred years, spread far and near over the world. It was foreshown and foretold long before by many plain and glorious prophecies. It was established by Christ and his apostles by signs and wonders and innumerable miracles. It was wonderfully propagated in a short time throughout the world, in spite of all the opposition of the whole earth and hell. It has been maintained ever since by the blood of millions of martyrs, and by the saintly and miraculous lives of millions of other servants of God, in every age. It has been embraced and followed by all the best and wisest of men, and defended by the most godly and learned. It has, in a word, all this time held forth the light of God to the whole world, by the purity and sanctity of its doctrines, and by zealously promoting the conversion of numberless sinners, and withdrawing thousands of all conditions from the broad way of the world to a life of holy solitude and penance:

so that it has at all times produced many eminent saints whose whole lives have been standing miracles of divine grace, and presumptive arguments of the truth of that faith and church which they all professed.

Conclude with thanks to Almighty God, who has given such authority to the Catholic Church, the guardian and depository of his truths, that if we are sincere in seeking, we cannot well fail of finding both.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

On a lively faith.

CONSIDER, first, that the faith so highly recommended in the word of God as the cause of justification, is a *lively and active faith* which has a constant influence in the conduct of our lives. Such a faith as this, is the source of all good to the soul: it keeps her in the remembrance and presence of God; teaches her to watch and pray; encourages her to hope, to love, to have a horror of sin: it is a *shield* against all the *fiery darts* of her spiritual enemies; protects her with the *helmet of salvation*, and arms her with *the sword of the spirit* (that is, *the word and truths of God*;) with which all the legions of hell are put to flight, when employed against them by a lively faith.

Consider, secondly, that the want of a *lively faith* is the source of all the evils which overspread Christendom. Look into all conditions of christians, and see how sin and Satan every where prevail, and how few in comparison, dedicate themselves in earnest, to what should be their only business. And do not all believe that there is a God; that there is a heaven and a hell; and that mortal sin is the broad road to hell? They believe all this, or they are not christians: But the misfortune is, their faith is not *lively*, or rather, for want of consideration it is quite *dead*.

Consider, thirdly, that the true christian must obtain a *lively faith* by earnest desires and prayer; and above all, by serious consideration. The truths of christianity relating to God and eternity, are very moving when duly weighed and meditated: but they make but little impression upon worldlings; because they live in a constant forgetfulness of them. The great difference between the good and the bad christian, the saint and the sinner, is, that the one thinks, and the other does not think; the one frequently meditates on divine truths; the other seldom gives them any attention.

Conclude to seek and nourish this *lively faith* by praying well and living well, and, in order to this, by *thinking well*;

without which there will be but little sense of God in your prayer, and hardly any sign of God in your life.

MONDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY.

On divine hope.

CONSIDER, first, that as by faith we believe in God; so by hope we place our confidence in God. It is styled by the apostle, (Heb. vi. 19.) "the anchor of the soul, sure and firm," (not fixed in the earth, but in heaven) "entering in even with-in the veil" to the true sanctuary where our "high priest Jesus Christ is entered for us." It keeps our souls ever steady in the midst of all the storms of this boisterous sea of the world, and rests secure on the divine power, goodness, promises and mercy.

Consider, secondly, that divine *hope* keeps the golden mean between the two extremes of *despair* and *presumption*, both of them sins against the Holy Ghost, because they obstruct in a particular manner all the motions and graces of this Divine Spirit. Ah! never give yourself up to *despair*; since you have so good a God, rich in mercies to all that call upon him. But avoid also the other extreme, of presuming upon what he has not promised, or expecting to go to heaven by a way which leads to hell.

Consider, thirdly, that by divine hope we are "strengthened in the Lord, and the power of his might," (Eph. vi. 10.) and exchange our weakness for his almighty strength and power. His divine word and honor is engaged to stand by and defend all who put their trust in him. Thus hope "never confoundeth." It is "the helmet of salvation." With it "we run to the combat set before us" with courage, and resolutely fight our way to heaven.

Conclude earnestly to pray for this divine virtue, the sweet companion of your pilgrimage, and your safeguard in all dangers.

TUESDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY.

On joining self-diffidence with confidence in God.

CONSIDER, first, that he who trusts entirely in God and not in himself, is a wise man. But he that puts the least confidence in himself, is a foolish man; because the foundation of his building is mere sand which cannot support the least weight. "Cursed is the man," saith the prophet (Jeremy, xvii. 5.) "that

trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." This curse falls upon all who presume upon their own strength, without the grace of God.

Consider, secondly, that as God's honor is engaged to stand by those that hope in him; so he is in a manner obliged to oppose and resist those, who proudly ascribe to themselves the merit of any good, independently of him; and thus pretend to the glory due to him alone. Is it then possible that we, who are of ourselves mere nothingness, and incapable even of one good thought, should give into this extravagance!

Consider, thirdly, that self-confidence is one of the principal causes of the small progress of many seemingly pious christians: they rely too much upon their own resolutions, and thus repeatedly fall into the same sins they so often confess; and alas! too often die in their sins, in punishment of their self-sufficiency. It is a very subtle vice, and often lies unperceived in the midst of the soul, while it corrupts its very vitals.

Conclude to hope for all good from God, as always to mistrust yourself; and, according to the apostle's advice, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling," (Philip. ii. 12.)

WEDNESDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY.

On the Lord's Prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that all the good we can hope and pray for is comprised in that short, but most excellent prayer which Christ has taught us, commonly called THE LORD'S PRAYER. In it we are taught to make acts of all the most necessary virtues of faith, hope, love of God, conformity to his blessed will, charity for our neighbors, forgiveness of injuries, and repentance of our sins; and daily to aspire after the bread of life. What a pity the generality of christians repeat this heavenly prayer with such coldness and indevotion!

Consider, secondly, that in the beginning of this divine prayer, we call God our FATHER, and we are authorised so to call him by the Son of God himself! Ah, christian soul! what greater dignity can there be than to be called, and to be in reality, a child of God? We add, *who art in heaven*, to remind us whither to direct our thoughts when we pray, and not to suffer any disorderly affection to the things of the earth, to hinder them from freely soaring up to heaven.

Consider, thirdly, what encouragement it should be to a christian at his prayers, to remember he is presenting his petitions to HIS FATHER; a Father, too, who has the most tender affection for his children,—who entices them to pray, and

teaches them, in this excellent form of prayer, what to ask, with an assurance of success, provided it be expedient for them; and whose power, riches and mercy, are still infinite. Let, then, this endearing title of OUR FATHER, in the Lord's prayer, raise our hopes in God, and excite our love.

Conclude daily to use this divine prayer with a serious attention and suitable devotion.

THURSDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY.

Hallowed be thy name.

CONSIDER, first, that the first or principal duty of a christian is, to love his God with his whole heart and soul; and consequently, the first and principal object of his desires and prayers, is the greater honor and glory of God. His love for his God makes him rejoice, to think that he is in himself infinitely happy and glorious, and will be so to all eternity: but it grieves him to think how little this infinite goodness is known, praised, and glorified in this miserable world, even by these very souls of ours, made by him and for him; and he earnestly seeks a remedy for this evil, by praying that God would effectually teach us and all men to love, serve, and glorify his holy name.

Consider, secondly, that this petition contains an act of divine love, even of perfect charity and benevolence; because it expresses the longing desires of the soul for the greater honor, praise, and glory of her Maker; also an act of the most perfect charity for herself and all mankind. For what greater good can she wish or procure for herself or them, than that God may be ever glorified in them and by them, for time and eternity? Thus divine charity, in all its branches, is exercised in this first petition.

Consider, thirdly, that in praying for the hallowing or sanctifying of the name of God, we pray in effect for the sanctification of the whole world: that the knowledge of the true and living God, and his Son Jesus Christ, may be spread over all the earth, and that all hearts may love him; and, in a word, that all men upon earth may be saints. See then the vast extent of this petition, by which we pray for all glory to God, and for all good to man; and let your heart go along with your tongue as often as you repeat it.

Conclude to let this earnest desire of the greater glory of God in all things, be the ruling passion of your heart; and he will glorify you for all eternity.

FRIDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY.

Thy kingdom come.

CONSIDER, first, that in holy scripture the kingdom of God is understood in three different senses. 1. It is taken for the eternal kingdom of God in heaven: 2. For the spiritual kingdom of Christ in his church, upon earth: 3. For the mystical kingdom of God in our souls, according to that of our Lord, (Luke xvii. 21.) "The kingdom of God is within you." In this petition we pray for the kingdom of God in all these senses. Admire that a worm of the earth, taken from the dunghill of sin, should be authorised to aspire even to an eternal kingdom, to live and reign for endless ages with the living God.

Consider, secondly, that as the kingdom of God, in scripture, often signifies that spiritual kingdom which Christ came to establish upon earth, and his reign in his church, in which he is both king and priest for ever, we must earnestly pray for the exaltation of this kingdom of Christ, and that the opposite reign of Satan and Sin, may have an end; that all infidels, heretics, and schismatics, may be converted to the true faith, and all abuses removed; and that divine faith, hope, and charity, with all other virtues, may reign, both in the pastors of God's church, and in all the people of God.

Consider, thirdly, that we are particularly to have in view, in this petition, our own sanctification; that God may reign without control in our hearts, and make our whole interior his own, by giving us the victory over all our passions, and a strong and perfect love for him. O blessed kingdom of divine love! when will thy sacred flames consume in me all that is in any way displeasing to my God?

Conclude, in the first place, to endeavor to establish this kingdom of God in your own soul; and, as he has promised, nothing shall be wanting to you either in this life, or hereafter.

SATURDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY.*Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*

CONSIDER, first, that this petition, like the two former, contains an act of divine love: for the soul here desires to give ALL to God, and that all may embrace and adore, love, serve, and obey, the sacred will of God, in all things. It also includes a love of the most perfect charity, to ourselves, and to our neighbors, since we here pray for so great a good in *their* and *our* own favor, as is this perfect conformity to the will of God, like that of the saints and angels in heaven.

Consider, secondly, that the will of God is always good, is always wise, always right and equitable; and therefore we ought ardently to embrace it, and to love it. He knows what is best for us, and will order what is best, if we give ourselves up to him. And how can we consult better our own interest? In a word, the will of God is all powerful: it is God himself; and therefore it would be madness to rebel, and would serve for nothing but to make us miserable.

Consider, thirdly, that in all our actions and deliberations, we must follow this will of God to the best of our knowledge and power; and we must resign and submit ourselves, under all our afflictions and disappointments, to his blessed will—assuring ourselves, that nothing happens to us in this kind, but by the appointment of heaven: all comes from the hand of HIM, who is both infinitely wise, and infinitely good to his creatures.

Conclude always to recite this petition of the Lord's prayer, with these dispositions of the love of God, and of resignation to his holy will.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Give us this day our daily bread.

CONSIDER, first, that we are taught in this petition, to pray for all necessities, both spiritual and temporal, under the name of our *daily bread*, which we here beg, for this short *day* of our mortal life, till we arrive at the happy day of a blissful eternity. With regard to worldly things, we pray for them with more indifference, as of smaller consequence—and without solicitude, knowing that if we seek first the kingdom of heaven, they will not be wanting to us, as far as is expedient. But we pray with greater earnestness for the bread which is to support the spiritual life of our souls; namely, divine grace, the word of God, and the holy sacraments: and this for ourselves and all mankind.

Consider, secondly, that the holy fathers expound this petition, in particular of the *bread of life*, which we receive in the blessed eucharist. This bread is the sacred body and blood of Jesus Christ, who calls himself "the living bread which came down from heaven," (John vi. 15.) and assures us, "that he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever;" and that "the bread which he will give is his flesh for the life of the world." It is stiled our *daily bread*, because we should daily partake of it, either really or spiritually.

Consider, thirdly, that we ought to make a spiritual communion, as often as we repeat the words, "Give us this day

our daily bread," by a lively faith and hope in Christ, the true bread of life, and by inviting him to take possession of our souls for ever. Happy they who communicate frequently in the day! They shall reap the most admirable fruits of their piety.

Conclude to make this henceforward your daily practice, and always to have in view this *bread of life*.

MONDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

CONSIDER, first, that "we all offend in many things," (Jas. iii. 2.) and not a day passes in which we do not contract fresh debts to our Great Master, by sins either of omission or commission,—in thought, word, or deed; and therefore we ought daily to sue for a discharge. This is the design of this petition in the Lord's prayer, which, when recited with fervor, readily obtains the remission of these daily debts. They are of worse consequence to our souls than we can well imagine, if neglected.

Consider, secondly, that our best security is to be always repenting of our past sins, since we are quite uncertain whether our repentance for them has ever been sufficient to obtain acceptance with God. Alas! the debt of one mortal sin is immense;—a sum of ten thousand talents, which (of ourselves) we are utterly unable to discharge. Let us then recite this petition of the Lord's prayer with a penitential spirit, for all our past sins, known or unknown, committed personally or occasioned in others; and daily, with Magdalene, implore the mercy of our Redeemer, both for ourselves and for all poor sinners.

Consider, thirdly, that in this petition we beg of God to "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Which words were added by our Lord, to put us in mind not to expect forgiveness from God, if we do not FROM OUR HEARTS forgive the offences of our neighbors against us. Wherefore, we must lay aside all rancor and animosity, if we wish to obtain the mercy of God.

Conclude, in this petition, first, heartily to repent for your daily sins; secondly, daily to renew your sorrow for past offences; thirdly, to forgive, from your heart, all who have offended you.

TUESDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY.

Lead us not into temptation.

CONSIDER, first, that the true penitent must not be content with seeking the remission of his past sins; he must decline with horror the like evils for the time to come, and endeavor to avoid all dangerous occasions and temptations, and with a feeling sense of his own weakness beg of God to stand by him and assist him. And this is the chief meaning of this petition, "Lead us not into temptation."

Consider, secondly, that St. James says (chap 1. 13.) God is not "a tempter of evils; he tempteth no man;" so as to incite, allure, or provoke him to sin. No, certainly: such temptations as these cannot be from God, who is essentially good, and always abhors sin; they are from the world, the flesh, and the devil: yet as these never have power to tempt us but with the divine permission, nor strength to overcome us but when we neglect to apply to God as we ought, for his grace; therefore we use this expression to signify our total dependence upon him. And with regard to afflictions, crosses, pains, &c., of which God is certainly the author, and which are often called in scripture temptations, we beg he would have regard to our weakness, and never suffer us to sink under them.

Consider, thirdly, that temptations, far from being sins to us, if we give no way to them, and bring them not upon us by our own fault, are often the occasions of much good to our souls, by obliging us to watch and pray; and help to keep us humble. It is not, therefore, our design to pray we may never have any temptations at all; (for this would not be expedient,) but that we may never yield to temptation.

Conclude under all temptations to join an humble distrust in yourself, with a firm confidence in God, and fervent prayer; and to reject with horror the least consent or satisfaction in any evil thought.

WEDNESDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY.*Deliver us from evil.*

CONSIDER, first, that we beg of God in this petition chiefly, that he would deliver us from all sin, past, present, or future; from all the consequences of sin, and the punishment which our sins have deserved; from the slavery of our passions and sinful habits; and from the tyranny and possession of the evil one, who has dominion over all wilful sinners. For in reality, sin is the cause of all our evils, or rather, properly speak-

ing, it is our only evil, because without it no real evil would exist.

Consider, secondly, what the evils are from which we beg to be delivered, and which spring originally from sin. Those which regard this life are—public calamities, wars, plagues, famines, earthquakes, inundations, &c., besides a multitude of private evils to which each one is daily exposed. Then the much more deplorable evils, whether public or private, of heresy, schism, persecution, oppression of the poor, national vices, sacrilege, and scandal, &c. And with regard to the future, the dreadful evil of unprovided death and final impenitence, the judgment of damnation and a miserable eternity. Good God, in thy tender mercy deliver us from all these most dismal evils.

Consider, thirdly, your own evils; in particular the multitude of your past and present sins, infinitely more numerous and more enormous than you imagine; the uncertainty of pardon, because of the weakness and uncertainty of your repentance; the vices and passions you are daily subject to; the snares of your enemies who continually seek your ruin; the blindness and corruption of your own heart, and the dreadful uncertainty of your eternal lot; and you will be convinced of the necessity of crying out continually “deliver us from evil, amen.”

Conclude to embrace humble and frequent prayer, as the sure mean to be delivered from all these evils, which threaten you continually.

THURSDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY.

On morning prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that every christian ought to begin the day with the worship of God, and to “give his heart” as the wise man says, (Eccles. xxxix. 6.) “to resort early to the Lord that made him; and to pour forth his prayer in the sight of the Most High.” The manna of heaven melted away and was lost, if the people of God did not rise before the sun to gather it: “that it might be known to all men,” says Solomon, (Wisdom xvi. 28.) that we must prevent the sun to bless God, and worship him at the dawning of the light.” “O God, my God,” says the royal prophet, (Psalms lxii.) “to thee do I watch at break of day.”

Consider, secondly, how just it is that God should have our first thoughts: He is our first beginning and our last end. Therefore he has a strict claim to our first and last thoughts; and it would be a crying injustice and treachery to prostitute them to

his enemy. Let us therefore give to God his due, by consecrating them entirely to him, together with our whole selves, for time and eternity.

Consider, thirdly, that we must all fight, and fight continually against our vices and passions, or they will carry us to hell. Hence we must renew every morning our good resolutions; yet, without trusting at all in ourselves: and prepare beforehand for the conflict, by forecasting the occasions and temptations which may happen in the day, and by taking the measures proper to surmount them, with the grace of God.

Conclude to be diligent in your morning exercise. A good beginning is a great matter.

FRIDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY.

On evening prayer.

CONSIDER, first, that evening prayer is not less necessary than morning prayer; for God is both our first beginning and last end. They are like the two daily meals of the soul, and ought not on any account to be neglected; and if upon any occasion we are hindered from taking these spiritual meals at the usual hour, we must take them afterwards, as we do our bodily meals. And as we take care that our families and those under our charge should not want their daily corporal sustenance; so with much more reason ought we to be solicitous, that their souls may not starve, for want of assembling them to prayer, and seeing that they are regular in this daily exercise.

Consider, secondly, that one of the parts of the evening exercise, is the daily examination of conscience, by which we endeavor to call to mind how we have spent the day from morning till night; how we have discharged both the common duties of a christian, and the particular duties of our station or calling; and especially, how we have behaved with regard to our ordinary failings, and our predominant passions: we must conclude with a hearty sorrow for all the sins of the day, and those of our whole life. How unhappy are all those, who for want of this precaution, are every night exposed to the evident danger of finding themselves in hell before morning.

Consider, thirdly, that besides offering up to God every night the sacrifice of an humble and contrite heart, the christian should also think seriously of his last end, and dispose himself for it by acts of a lively faith, a firm hope in his Redeemer, and perfect charity, with an entire resignation of himself to the holy will of God; and thus compose himself to rest in the arms of his mercy. Let this be your constant practice.

Conclude with a fixed resolution both to do this yourself,

and likewise to take care that all under your charge be diligent in performing it. This is the surest way to secure to yourself and them a happy death.

SATURDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY.

On praying always.

CONSIDER, first, that we are called upon in the word of God "to pray always," (Luke xviii. 1.) "to pray without ceasing," (1 Thess. v. 17.) and to "seek the face of the Lord evermore," (Ps. civ. 4.) The soul that truly loves God, will often in the day think on him, and raise her heart to heaven; for it is the property of love often to think of the beloved; and we shall quickly lose both him and his love, if we pass whole days in the forgetfulness of him.

Consider, secondly, that the practice of this continual prayer requires, only that the soul at the beginning of every action should turn to her God, by offering up to his honor and glory what she is going to do, and at the same time offering her whole self to him; and in the midst of her ordinary actions and conversation, she should frequently tend to him by aspirations of love, and implore his assistance by short enraptured prayers. Thus every action will partake of the nature of prayer.

Consider, thirdly, that the saints even while their hands were at work, took care to have their hearts on God. No time, nor place, nor company, nor occupation, can exclude the divine immensity, which fills heaven and earth; nor hinder God from being so near to us, that our very souls are not more present to our bodies which they animate, than God is to the very centre of our souls. Therefore let no time, nor place, nor company, nor occupation, divert us from often thinking on him, and speaking to him in our hearts. Nothing can be so profitable to us, nor so great an honor.

Conclude in the midst of all external occupations, to keep your mind and heart pure from disorderly affections; and God will teach you effectually, without the actual use of any book, "to pray always."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

On the great commandment of divine love.

CONSIDER, first, the words of the divine law, (quoted Mark xii. 30.) "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole

heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This," says our Lord, "is the greatest and the first commandment," (Matt. xxii. 38.) Yes; it is indeed the greatest and most excellent of all the divine commandments. It tends directly to raise our souls above this earth, above the heaven of heavens and the whole created universe, and to unite them forever to the great Maker of heaven and earth by perfect love.

Consider, secondly, the infinite, goodness of God towards us in this commandment. Is then our love of any consequence to him? Can we add any thing to his happiness by loving him? What is there in us insignificant creatures, that he should concern himself whether we love him or not? How wretchedly stupid should we then be, if, notwithstanding the divine goodness stooping so low as to insist upon thus entering an eternal friendship with us, we should refuse him our love. Alas! we should in some sense be worse than the evil spirits themselves.

Consider, thirdly, the excellent fruits of divine love. She is the queen of virtues: she gives life to them all: even faith and hope are dead, when she is not in their company. She brings with her the pardon of all our sins: she makes us the friends and favorites of the Most High: his children, his spouses, his temples: in a word, she is "the bond of all perfection."

Conclude henceforward to make it the business of your life to learn this great lesson of divine love; and as none but God can effectually teach it, beg this favor with most humble prayer.

MONDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On loving the Lord our God above all things.

CONSIDER, first, the import of these words, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Who then is this Lord? The eternal, self-existent, incomprehensible and infinite being, who alone properly is, and who is being itself. "I am who am," saith he, (Exod. iii. 14.) *The Lord*; that is, the Creator and absolute Master of the whole universe, of all things visible and invisible; compared with whom all things else are just nothing at all.

Consider, secondly, the motives of divine love, implied in those words, *Thy God*. They signify, my soul, that this Lord of infinite majesty is pleased even to be *thine*. Yes, he is *thy God*; he is *thy* first beginning and *thy* last end, *thy* Maker, *thy* Father, *thy* Spouse, *thy* Pastor, *thy* Keeper, *thy* constant benefactor, *thy* ever faithful friend, *thy* sovereign good and the source of all *thy* happiness. He has redeemed thee when

lost, with the precious blood of his only Son. Oh! love him then for ever and ever.

Consider, thirdly, that this love must be a love of preference, above all things else whatever. For he that loves his worldly honor, his interest, his pleasure, his own will, the gratification of his humors and passions, or the pleasing of any person, how near or dear soever, more than his God, is not worthy of God: and not only he that prefers any creature before God, but he that puts himself, his own life, his dearest affections, or even the whole creation on a level with his God, offers him the greatest outrage; because the whole universe, compared with him, is a mere nothing.

Conclude, at least henceforward to love the Lord your God above all things, and nothing else with him, but what you love for his sake, or with relation to him.

TUESDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On loving God with our whole heart.

CONSIDER, first, that divine love in the first place calls for our heart. "My Son, give me thy heart," says the Wisdom of God, (Prov. xxiii. 26.) We must therefore offer up this heart of ours as a holocaust to God. It must die to itself, and to all disorderly affections, by mortification and self-denial, and then be laid on God's altar to be wholly dedicated and consecrated to him, and to be consumed in the flames of divine love—that true fire, which our Lord came to enkindle upon earth.

Consider, secondly, how just it is that we should love God with our whole heart, since it belongs wholly to him by every kind of title. He made our heart for himself, to be the living temple of his love; and he has given it an immense capacity of love, which nothing less than God can satisfy. He has shed his own most precious blood to cleanse it for himself; and it was solemnly dedicated to him at our baptism. In a word, he has sent down his Divine Spirit, to establish in it his kingdom, and to make it his throne.

Consider, thirdly, that the love of God will not admit a divided heart: he will not suffer a rival in his kingdom, a partner on his throne, an idol in his temple. Our God is a jealous God, and therefore, if we follow any other lovers, we lose his love, and drive him from us. Alas! my soul, what is it thou wouldst associate with God in thy heart? Thy worldly pride; thy carnal affections; thy sensual inclinations? Assure thyself he cannot endure such company as this.

Conclude to love your friend in God, and your enemy for

God's sake, and all lawful objects according to the measure prescribed by divine love: thus you will "love God with your whole heart."

WEDNESDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On loving God with our whole soul.

CONSIDER, first, that in order to comply with this part of the divine commandment, we must oblige all the powers of our soul to bow down, and embrace affectionately this sweet law of love; it will ennoble and perfect them all. The light of this bright flame will dispel the dark mists raised by your passions and self-love, which so often make you go astray. Let then your understanding be directed; let your memory be recollected by divine love; let all your words and actions, all your desires be ever guided by this heavenly charity.

Consider, secondly, that as the will always has *good* for the objects of its love, so as not to be able to love or embrace any thing but under the form or appearance, at least, of *good*; it must in a special manner be consecrated to divine love. For God alone is the true and sovereign *good*, and he alone can satisfy the inbred appetite we have of *good*. In the love of him alone we feel ourselves happy: all other loves only impose upon us, and leave our souls empty. Wherefore, for our own sake, as well as for his infinite goodness, we ought to give our whole selves to his heavenly love.

Consider, thirdly, what is said in the hundred and thirtieth psalm, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great pattern of divine love. "In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and thy law, in the midst of my heart." This will of his Father was during his whole life, the continual object of his love, the subject of all his thoughts, the motive of all his words and actions. And didst not thou also, my soul, come into this world to do and to love the will of God? Hast thou here any other business? Is it not written of thee also, in the book of life, that thou shalt do the will of God?

Conclude to dedicate your whole soul, with all its powers, to the love of God; and especially resign your will to him, without reserve.

THURSDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On lovindg God with our whole mind.

CONSIDER, first, that the mind is the seat of thought, and consequently, of consideration, meditation, and recollection, in God. Therefore, to love God with our whole mind, is to have our thoughts ever turned towards him, to walk always in his presence, and to keep ourselves recollected in the remembrance of him. This was required of all the servants of God, even in the old law; and much more in the new, which is the law of love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c., said he, (Deut. vi.) "and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt frequently repeat them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising," &c.

Consider, secondly, how reasonable and just it is, that we should love our God with our *whole mind*, by ever remembering and thinking on him. He always remembers and thinks on us: his eye is always upon us. Worthless as we are, from all eternity we have had a place in his eternal *mind*, in which he has cherished us with infinite love: and shall we refuse our *whole mind* to him! What can we think of, so noble, so desirable, so lovely, so charming, so profitable, so delightful as our God? Why then do we let whole days pass in thinking of every other thing but him?

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Conclude in future to banish from your mind all impertinent thoughts, and vain amusements; and God will make your soul his paradise.

FRIDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On loving God with our whole strength.

CONSIDER, first, that we ourselves belong entirely to God, and that by many titles. Therefore his love should not only reside in our *heart*, reign in all the powers of our *soul*, and fill our *mind*; it ought also to show itself in our whole conversation, and to regulate all our words and actions, so as to give to

heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This," says our Lord, "is the greatest and the first commandment," (Matt. xxii. 38.) Yes; it is indeed the greatest and most excellent of all the divine commandments. It tends directly to raise our souls above this earth, above the heaven of heavens and the whole created universe, and to unite them forever to the great Maker of heaven and earth by perfect love.

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Conclude, at least henceforward to love the Lord your God above all things, and nothing else with him, but what you love for his sake, or with relation to him.

TUESDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On loving God with our whole heart.

CONSIDER, first, that divine love in the first place calls for our heart. "My Son, give me thy heart," says the Wisdom of God, (Prov. xxiii. 26.) We must therefore offer up this heart of ours as a holocaust to God. It must die to itself, and to all disorderly affections, by mortification and self-denial, and then be laid on God's altar to be wholly dedicated and consecrated to him, and to be consumed in the flames of divine love—that true fire, which our Lord came to enkindle upon earth.

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Conclude to love your friend in God, and your enemy for

God's sake, and all lawful objects according to the measure prescribed by divine love: thus you will "love God with your whole heart."

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CONSIDER, first, that in order to comply with this part of the divine commandment, we must oblige all the powers of our soul to bow down, and embrace affectionately this sweet law of love; it will ennoble and perfect them all. The light of this bright flame will dispel the dark mists raised by your passions and self-love, which so often make you go astray. Let then your understanding be directed; let your memory be recollected by divine love; let all your words and actions, all your desires be ever guided by this heavenly charity.

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Consider, thirdly, what is said in the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great pattern of divine love. "In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and thy law, in the midst of my heart." This will of his Father was during his whole life, the continual object of his love, the subject of all his thoughts, the motive of all his words and actions. And didst not thou also, my soul, come into this world to do and to love the will of God? Hast thou here any other business? Is it not written of thee also, in the book of life, that thou shalt do the will of God?

Conclude to dedicate your whole soul, with all its powers, to the love of God; and especially resign your will to him, without reserve.

THURSDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

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CONSIDER, first, that the mind is the seat of thought, and consequently, of consideration, meditation, and recollection, in God. Therefore, to love God with our whole mind, is to have our thoughts ever turned towards him, to walk always in his presence, and to keep ourselves recollected in the remembrance of him. This was required of all the servants of God, even in the old law; and much more in the new, which is the law of love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c., said he, (Deut. vi.) "and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt frequently repeat them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising," &c.

Consider, secondly, how reasonable and just it is, that we should love our God with our *whole mind*, by ever remembering and thinking on him. He always remembers and thinks on us: his eye is always upon us. Worthless as we are, from all eternity we have had a place in his eternal *mind*, in which he has cherished us with infinite love: and shall we refuse our *whole mind* to him! What can we think of, so noble, so desirable, so lovely, so charming, so profitable, so delightful as our God? Why then do we let whole days pass in thinking of every other thing but him?

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Conclude in future to banish from your mind all impertinent thoughts, and vain amusements; and God will make your soul his paradise.

FRIDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On loving God with our whole strength.

CONSIDER, first, that we ourselves belong entirely to God, and that by many titles. Therefore his love should not only reside in our *heart*, reign in all the powers of our *soul*, and fill our *mind*; it ought also to show itself in our whole conversation, and to regulate all our words and actions, so as to give to

each of them its due perfection. This is loving God with our *whole strength*.

Consider, secondly, that the true love of God is like a fire; it cannot be idle. It works great things when occasion and opportunity offer; and, when these are wanting, it will do wonders by the perfection which it gives even to the least and most ordinary of our actions. It directs them all to God by the pure and perfect intention of ever doing his holy will, and procuring in all things his greater glory. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do; do all to the glory of God," says the apostle, (1 Cor. x. 31.)

Consider, thirdly, that we should also labor, in the progress of all our actions and conversations, to sanctify them by frequent aspirations of divine love. This may be done by often turning our souls to our Beloved, considered as intimately present within us; offering our whole selves to him, rejoicing in his glory, lamenting to see his love so much slighted by unthinking mortals; &c.

Conclude to season all your actions in this manner with divine love; and you will love your God with your whole strength.

SATURDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY.

On returning love for love.

CONSIDER, first, that a generous soul, setting aside the other numberless motives of divine love, finds a most powerful and urgent incitement to love God, in the consideration of the love which he has for us, and has had for us from all eternity; and of the innumerable benefits bestowed on us in consequence of this eternal love. And yet (O ye heavens be astonished at so much baseness!) the far greatest part of blind mortals still prefer the meanest toys, and mere corruption before the love of God!

Consider, secondly, that God has loved us first. His love is continual; his love is constant, and never forsakes them who do not first forsake his love. It is most generous; it imparts all good to his beloved without desiring any return from them but their love, in order to make them happy for eternity. In a word, his love is infinite, both in its origin, which is himself, and in communicating to us an eternal, infinite good, which is also himself.

Consider, thirdly, that God is the author of all our good: our very being, our whole soul and body is his gift. He has preserved us: he has nourished and cherished us from the first moment of our conception to this hour: he has defended us

from a thousand evils : he has given his angels a charge over us : he has sent his own Son from heaven for us, to deliver us from hell, and to procure for us mercy, grace and salvation ! He shed all his precious blood for us. He has left with us, in order to bring us to himself, his word, his church, his sacrifice, his sacraments, his body and blood, his graces and inspirations.

Conclude to fix your thought and heart always upon him, whose love is always heaping favors upon you, even while you offend.

ROGATION SUNDAY.

On the devotion of the time.

CONSIDER, first, that the days between this Sunday and the ascension of our Lord are called *Rogation-Days*, or days of prayer. They are set aside by the church for solemn prayers and supplications, joined with abstinence and penance, in order to turn away the wrath of God, provoked by our sins ; to remove far from us his scourges, of wars, plagues, famines, &c. ; to implore his mercy for ourselves and all his people ; and to beg his blessing upon the fruits of the earth. Many visible judgments of God upon the people, first gave occasion to the church to institute these days of devotion ; and the success which then attended her piety, made her continue the practice to our times ; since we have as much reason as ever to fear the wrath of God.

Consider, secondly, that although we do not every day feel the heavy hand of divine justice, by the experience of public calamities or other visible judgments ; yet if we consider the guilt of so many crying sins, not only of particular persons, but even of whole nations continually calling to God for vengeance, we shall have too much reason to apprehend, that even now the sword of God's justice is hanging over our heads, and that the worst of his judgments will quickly fall upon christendom in general, if not averted by prayer and penance. Ah ! neglect not these days of salvation, lest they never more return.

Consider, thirdly, what encouragement we have, both in the epistle and gospel of the Rogations, to look for mercy and all good for ourselves and neighbors, from humble and fervent prayer. In the epistle (James v.) we are taught the great efficacy of continual prayer, and exhorted to pray for one another, in order to salvation ; it shows also the reward of those who contribute to the salvation of others. In the gospel (Luke xi.) we are exhorted by Christ our Lord to persevere in prayer ; and

by the example of a friend, and of a father, to look for good gifts from our heavenly Father, by the means of earnest prayer. Wherefore, "let us go with confidence," at this time, "to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid," (Heb. iv. 16.)

Conclude to join now with the whole church in prayer, and penance, that you may obtain mercy both for yourself and for your neighbors.

ROGATION MONDAY.

On the means of attaining to the love of God.

CONSIDER, first, that as the desire of wisdom is the beginning of wisdom; so the first step to the love of God, which is true wisdom indeed, is an earnest desire to love God. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after" this heavenly "justice; for they shall be filled," (Matt. v.) This desire makes us pray fervently, seek continually, knock earnestly at the gate of divine love. It makes us glad to part with all things else to purchase this precious pearl, and to acquire this invaluable treasure.

Consider, secondly, that if we entertain in our soul any affection to worldly vanities, to avarice or sensual pleasures, divine love will not come near us; because it cannot endure such disorderly company as this; nor will it dwell in a soul enslaved to worldly desires and lawless passions. These must be dismissed, or at least brought into subjection, if we would learn to love God. Wherefore, it must be our serious study to mortify our irregular affections.

Consider, thirdly, that the sovereign means of acquiring divine love, is the daily exercise of mental prayer, or meditation. Here the memory represents all the motives we have to love God; the understanding is taught to know him, and the affections of the will are inflamed at his presence. This then is the true school of love: let no day pass without frequenting it.

Conclude to embrace all the means, by which you may attain to divine love. It will become in you a fountain springing up to everlasting life.

ROGATION TUESDAY.

On acts of divine love.

CONSIDER, first, that the love of God is like a fire, always in motion and always tending upwards to its heavenly element: it quickly dies, if it lies idle. Wherefore it must be nourished by frequent acts of love. We exercise the love of God in our heart by affections; we exercise the love of God in our works by effects. When in heart and work we tend to God as our sovereign good, and aspire after the eternal enjoyment of him, we love him with the love of what is termed chaste concupiscence. We love him with a love of benevolence, that is, of sincere and perfect charity, when both in heart and work we entirely resign ourselves and all things else to him, as infinitely good in himself. It is just we should daily exercise both these acts.

Consider, secondly, that benevolence is a love by which we sincerely wish all kind of good to the person beloved. Wherefore, if we would make proper acts of benevolence towards God, we must desire and procure, as far as we are able, the greater honor and glory of his name, and the establishment of his reign, both in our own hearts, and throughout the whole world; and pray that all men may know, love, and serve him: we must be concerned at every thing that offends his divine majesty. These are far better acts of divine love, than merely telling God we love him.

Consider, thirdly, that the exercise of the love of God recommended, above all others, in holy scripture, is loving his divine law, and keeping his commandments. "This is the charity," the love, "of God, that we keep his commandments," (1 John v. 3.) "He that keepeth his word, in him, in very deed, the charity of God is perfected," (chap. ii. 5.) The beloved disciple continually recommends the acts of this kind of divine love: and the psalms every where breathe the most ardent love of the holy law and commandments of God. No other devotion can secure us against illusions.

Conclude to exercise yourself daily in all these ways of loving God, and ever remember that loving God and keeping his commandments go always hand in hand; because we cannot love God without loving his will, notified to us by his commandments.

ROGATION WEDNESDAY.

On other exercises of the love of God.

CONSIDER, first, that divine love is also exercised in the penitential way, by souls, that like Magdalene, (of whom our Lord pronounced—"many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much") go daily in spirit to the feet of Christ, to wash them with the tears of repentance. And whoever has forfeited the grace of baptism by mortal sin, should endeavor to imitate those great penitents of old, who thus became afterwards such glorious saints. This kind of exercise will be in some measure natural to all, who have a right sense of what God is, and what sin is; and of the dreadful evil which they have incurred by offending, though it were but once in their life, so great and so good a God.

Consider, secondly, that there are other ways of mourning, by which we may exercise a love of God most agreeable to him, and beneficial to ourselves. For instance, when we sit down at the foot of the cross, and there contemplating the extreme anguish and distress, the racking pains and torments of our dear Redeemer, we excite in our souls affections of an ardent love in the way of compassion: also when we mourn for the innumerable sins daily committed against him throughout the world; to see his infinite goodness slighted; his mercies continually abused, by blind unthinking mortals, for whom he has shed the last drop of his sacred blood.

Consider, thirdly, that there is another most perfect exercise of love, which comes nearest to the love of the blessed, in the way of joy and congratulation; when we rejoice in God, and in his boundless perfections; when we are delighted to think he is what he is; infinitely good, infinitely holy, infinitely perfect; that he is the sovereign Lord of all; and that nothing can be added to him, because he is every way infinite.

Conclude to dedicate yourself for time and eternity, to this most perfect love of God; and give yourself and all things else to Him, a hundred times in the day.

ASCENSION-DAY.

On the ascension of our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, that our Lord, after having employed forty days upon earth to comfort and encourage his disciples, to confirm them in the faith of his resurrection, and to instruct them in the mysteries of his kingdom; on the fortieth day, taking them out with him to Mount Olivet, lifted up his hands and

gave them his blessing, and then ascended visibly up to heaven before their eyes; till a cloud intercepted their sight. Bow down to receive with joy and gratitude, this blessing of your Saviour ascending now to his Father and to your Father. Follow him in spirit and contemplate your human nature exalted in the person of your Lord, above all the cherubim and seraphim, and seated at the right hand of God.

Consider, secondly, that our Lord by his ascension has taken possession of the kingdom of heaven, not only for himself, but also for us. He purchased this kingdom for us with his own blood: he opened the gates of it by his death: he showed us the way by his resurrection: and by his ascension he has given us an earnest of our coming one day to reign there with him. He is our head; we are his members. Where the head is, it is natural the members also should be. What a comfort then to christian souls to reflect, that in due time he will come and "take them to himself; that where he is they also may be," [John xiv.]

Consider, thirdly, that our Lord, by his ascension, has entered heaven in quality of our Friend, of our Advocate and Mediator, of our High Priest, of our parent. All these endearing characters he still retains, now that he reigns all powerful on his throne of majesty: and what encouragements are here, to raise our hopes and increase our love?

Conclude to celebrate this festival of the Ascension with suitable devotion, as one of the principal solemnities of the year. The Church of God considers it as such.

FRIDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION.

On the lessons to be learned from the ascension of our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, that as we ought to imitate the resurrection of the Lord by a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin; so we must also imitate his ascension by a spiritual ascension into heaven, and by dwelling there in spirit with him. Our Lord has told us, that where our treasure is, there our heart shall also be. If this our treasure be Christ, as it ought to be, then must our heart ascend with him to heaven, and there remain for ever with its Beloved.

Consider, secondly, that we must in the first place quit our vices and our criminal passions. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life," can have no place in heaven. All their pursuits are earthly: they press the soul down towards hell. Entreat then your dear Lord, through his triumphant ascension, to break all your bonds in sunder, which

keep you from ascending after him, and hinder you from fixing your heart in heaven.

Consider, thirdly, that it is not enough for a soul that desires to ascend to heaven after Christ, to be free from downright lust, or other scandalous excesses and passions : she must be disengaged in her affections also, from every person or thing which ties her down to earth, which captivates her thoughts, fills her with solicitude, or otherwise takes off her heart from the love of God. Nor let her flatter herself that her affections are innocent, because the object is not of itself criminal ; for be the object what it will, it is a crime to prefer it to God, or to love it so, as to forfeit for its sake the love of God.

Conclude to be jealous of yourself and your affections, lest they should impede your flight towards heaven.

SATURDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION.

Other lessons to be learned from the ascension of our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, what will be the sentiments of the soul, when after she has begun, by ascending daily in spirit into heaven, to relish something of the sweetness of the good things of the Lord in the land of the living, she finds herself still a prisoner in this foreign land, in this earthly Babylon : how will she wish to be delivered from this captivity ; to see an end of this long pilgrimage ! How will she lament her banishment, at so great a distance from her true country ! How tedious to her are all worldly enjoyments !

Consider, secondly, the admonition of the apostle, (Colos. iii. 1., &c.) "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God : mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth. For you are dead to sin, and your spiritual life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear who is your life, then shall you also appear with him in glory." Happy indeed are those christians, who enter into these sentiments on occasion of the ascension of our Lord !

Consider, thirdly, that our Lord at his ascension, according to authentic church history, left the last prints of his feet upon the top of Mount Olivet, in the place from whence he ascended ; which no length of time or accidents, or even industry of men could ever efface ; to teach us that the true way to ascend with Christ into heaven, is to have his footsteps always before our eyes, and to walk in them by a diligent imitation of his life.

Conclude steadily to trace these footsteps of your Redeemer, during life. Thus you will assuredly partake in the triumph of his ascension.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

On the precept of charity to our neighbor.

CONSIDER, first, that after the great and first commandment of "loving God with our whole heart and soul," the next of all the divine precepts is, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "This," saith our Lord, "is like to the other." So great indeed is the connexion, that we cannot fulfil the one without the other. "God is charity," says the beloved disciple, (1 John iv. 16.) "and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." And again, "he that loveth not (his neighbor) knoweth not God; for God is charity," (v. 8.) And, "if any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar," (v. 20.)

Consider, secondly, that without this charity, "though we spoke with the tongues of men and angels, and had the gift of prophecy, and all knowledge of the deepest mysteries, and faith strong enough even to remove mountains, we should still be nothing: and though we should give our whole substance to the poor, and our bodies to the flames, it would profit us nothing," saith St. Paul, (1 Cor. xiii.) "He that loveth not," according to St. John, (1. iii. 14.) "abideth in death." And this charity must include all mankind, without exception of nations or opinions, or of one single individual, even our greatest enemy, (Matt. xviii. 35.)

Consider, thirdly, that this is the favorite precept of Jesus Christ. "I give you a new commandment," saith he, [John xiii. 34, 35.] "that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know, that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." And chap. xv. 12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you." This love is, in some measure, to resemble even the love and union between him and his heavenly Father. "And not for them only," said he, "do I pray; but for them also, who through their word shall believe in me: that they all may be one, as their Father in me and I in thee: that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, [John xvii. 20, 21.]

Conclude to prove yourself henceforward a disciple of Christ indeed, by this spirit of universal charity for all: He died out of charity for all mankind.

MONDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

On the excellence of fraternal charity.

CONSIDER, first, that St. Peter calls upon all christians, [1. Pet. iv. 8.] "Before all things have a constant mutual charity; for charity covereth a multitude of sins;" and St. Paul, [Coloss. iii. 14.] "Above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection." He adds, [Rom. xiii. 8, 10.] that the love of our neighbors is the fulfilling of the law and commandments of God; and [Gal. v. 14.] that all the law is fulfilled in this one word: "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Consider, secondly, what are the properties of this charity. Charity is patient, says the apostle—is kind: charity envyeth not; dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own, [that is, she is not selfish:] she is not provoked to anger; she thinketh no evil; she rejoiceth not in iniquity, [that is, in any thing wrong;] but rejoiceth with the truth, [is pleased with whatever is right and true:] she beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things. No wonder this kind of charity should be the bond of perfection; since it cannot exist without the perfect love of God.

Consider, thirdly, that charity, in the strictest sense, is indeed a heavenly virtue: as well because she maintains her ground in heaven, and receives her full perfection there, where faith and hope are no more: ["Charity," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 8., "never falleth away:"] as also because the eternal charity of the saints is no small part of their heavenly felicity. Their love of God is their essential bliss: their love of one another, in God, multiplies their happiness, in proportion to the multitude of the blessed in heaven.

Conclude to seek with the utmost eagerness this heavenly charity. She will conduct you to the mansions of eternal rest.

TUESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

On the exercise of fraternal charity.

CONSIDER, first, that fraternal charity is a love of sincere benevolence; it seeks to procure and promote whatever may be for the real good of our neighbor; and it is to be kept alive in our souls by repeated acts of its own kind; by frequently exercising, in our neighbor's favor, not only the corporal, but also the spiritual works of mercy, with a pure intention of the glory of God and their salvation; by lamenting their errors and vices; by earnestly praying for their conversion, and doing our

endeavors to procure it. This is loving "not in word or in tongue, but in deed and truth," [1 John iii. 18.]

Consider, secondly, that true charity loves our neighbors precisely for God's sake—in God, and in order to God. No carnal, worldly, or natural affection, influenced by flesh and blood, or by any other consideration but God, can be called charity. Heathens and publicans often love and assist one another; and yet they are void of divine charity. Our love for our neighbor must tend ultimately to the glory of God, and their eternal good. This is true charity indeed.

Consider, thirdly, that by the old commandment we are to love every neighbor as ourselves. But the gospel commands us to love every neighbor even as Christ has loved us, [John xiii. 34.] Have we ever seriously reflected upon the perfection of the love which these rules require of us? O how tender is the love we bear ourselves! how sensible of every thing we consider evil to us! Is the love of our neighbor any thing like this? Again, how tenderly has Christ our Saviour loved us! He has laid down his very life for the love of us, even while we were his enemies! Alas, how far are we from loving our neighbors as Christ has loved us!

Conclude always to have your eye upon these two great rules of charity; and regulate your life as much as possible by them.

WEDNESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

On the different branches of fraternal charity.

CONSIDER, first, the various offices of fraternal charity. It corrects the natural bent of our corruption, which is always inclined to suspect, and judge the worst of our neighbors, and to be harsh and censorious in their regard. Charity inclines the will in their favor, so as to wish them well in all respects, and to forgive all injuries. It studies to promote their good and remedy their evils; and it restrains the tongue from uttering any words to their prejudice. In a word, it seasons and sweetens the whole body of our actions, and teaches us to do in all things, as we would be done by.

Consider, secondly, that charity to the poor is so strongly enforced by our Lord, that he has declared our eternal lot shall be decided by our diligence or negligence in this point, [Matt. xxv.] What we do for them he takes as done for himself, [v. 43, 45.] What then will become of those, who having his express orders to employ at least the superfluities of the riches entrusted in their hands, in relieving the necessities of his poor children, either covetously detain, or prodigally squander

away, what he intended for their support. Alas! what a figure will their extravagance or their avarice make at the great day of retribution!

Consider, thirdly, that by the great rule of fraternal charity, we must also love our enemies. "I say to you," saith our Lord, [Matt. v. 44.] "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." And he excludes from his mercy here, and from his kingdom hereafter, all those who exclude even their most implacable enemies, from their charity. This perfection of charity must come down to us from heaven, from our celestial Father who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and on the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust: it must be obtained by fervent prayer.

Conclude to exercise all these offices of charity, if you hope to enjoy God who is charity itself.

THURSDAY THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

On the great pattern of charity.

CONSIDER, first, that Christ Jesus, our good Samaritan, came down in person from his throne above, to save poor man. He had unhappily fallen among the infernal robbers, and was stript by them of all grace, and grievously wounded in all his faculties. Jesus was also our good shepherd: he came to seek the lost sheep, and to rescue it from destruction. "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us," [says the beloved disciple] "because God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him," [1 John iv. 9.]

Consider, secondly, that the whole life of Christ was a continual exercise of divine charity. From the first moment of his conception till he expired upon the cross, his soul was constantly employed in loving his heavenly Father, and in studying to accomplish his holy will; and in consequence of the love he bore his Father, and because it was his will, he dedicated his whole life also to the love of us; ever thinking on us, praying for us, and laboring for our eternal salvation.

Consider, thirdly, that the Son of God has carried his love for us beyond the bounds of death, and remains with us in the blessed sacrament, even to the end of the world. Here he nourishes our souls with his precious body and blood, and unites us to himself, in such a manner, as "to abide in us and we in him." And shall not so much charity on his part, oblige us also to dedicate our whole souls to divine charity?

Conclude to learn from the example of your Redeemer, how to love both your God and your neighbor.

The festivals of SS. George, Philip and James, and that of the finding of the Cross, generally falling between Easter and the Ascension, the meditations to be read on those days are placed here.

APRIL 23.

On ST. GEORGE.

CONSIDER, first, that St. George was an illustrious martyr, and a glorious saint. He was by profession a soldier. In quality of christians we are all soldiers of Jesus Christ. In our baptism, we have declared a perpetual war with the world, the flesh, and the devil, as the mortal enemies of the king of kings, mortal enemies of our true country, which is heaven; mortal enemies of our souls. Let us then, like St. George, fight manfully the battles of our Lord, as becomes true christian soldiers.

Consider, secondly, that St. George chose rather to lay down his life, and suffer the worst of torments, than to renounce Jesus Christ and his gospel. We must all make our way to heaven through many tribulations and persecutions, in one shape or other; and so far we are all obliged to be martyrs, that is witnesses, by our constancy to the faith and doctrine of Jesus. But, alas! how far are we in the practice of our lives, from giving our blood in this glorious cause; since we often yield to the slightest temptations!

Consider, thirdly, that St. George was a great saint, even in a state of life seemingly the most remote from sanctity; to teach us, that holiness is found in every lawful calling; and that if we are not saints, the fault is ours for not corresponding with the grace of God. In all lawful callings we may love God and our neighbor; and the soldier who complies best with these great duties, is undoubtedly the greatest saint.

Conclude to aim at this twofold charity with all your power; and He who crowned St. George, will also crown you.

MAY 1.

On SS. PHILIP and JAMES.

CONSIDER, first, that SS. Philip and James were both disciples of Christ, trained up in his heavenly school. They were both called by Christ, readily left all things to follow him, and were both chosen to be his apostles. After zealously preaching the faith, and converting numberless idolaters to God

they both sealed their doctrine with their blood. Happy should we be, were we disposed to imitate their zeal and fidelity!

Consider, secondly, that St. Philip himself had no sooner found Christ, but he conducted also his friend Nathaniel to Christ. This was friendship indeed; this was true charity. Alas! how many engage their friends in a partnership of their errors and vices! but how very few are solicitous to conduct them effectually to Christ, and the love and service of Almighty God! How few endeavor to recall them from perdition!

Consider, thirdly, that St. James was a person of great austerity of life, and a man of prayer. We are told, that by reason of his extraordinary sanctity, he alone was allowed to enter the inward sanctuary of the temple. But he enjoyed the still greater privilege of entering into the true sanctuary of God, and of conversing familiarly with him, by almost continual mental prayer. A privilege which we may all enjoy, as often as we please!

Conclude to imitate these great saints by an ardent love of God; and they will receive you into eternal bliss.

MAY 3.

On the finding of the cross.

CONSIDER, first, that on this day the church of God celebrates the yearly memorial of the discovery of the cross, that sacred instrument of our redemption, sanctified by the Son of God. It had long lain deep buried in the earth, when the pious empress St. Helen had the satisfaction to find it, together with the title, and the nails with which our blessed Saviour's hands and feet had been pierced. This discovery of the cross of Christ was attended with miracles, to the greater glory of HIS name, who had humbled himself to the death of the cross for our redemption. It was by the cross he was "lifted up from the earth, and drew all things to himself." O may he draw our hearts also, by this excess of his tender love.

Consider, secondly, what ought to be our dispositions with regard to the cross. If we have not the courage to seek it, at least we must receive it when the hand of Providence presents it to us; and cheerfully follow HIM who redeemed us by the cross. Christians, assure yourselves you cannot go to heaven without your cross: we must suffer with Christ, if we wish to reign with him.

Consider, thirdly, that the cross of Christ is the school of all christian virtues. Here we learn to imitate his perfect con-

formity to the will of his Father,—to practice his humility, by humbling ourselves under the hand of God; his meekness, his patience, his charity for his enemies, his obedience unto death; and are even taught to prefer the poverty, pain and ignominy of the cross, before all the riches, pleasures, and honors of this world.

Conclude, if you would be a true disciple of Jesus, not to fly from the cross,—nor be of the number of the unhappy christians, whom the apostle reproaches as “enemies of the cross of Christ,” by their inordinate attachments.

FRIDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

On preparing the soul for the Holy Ghost.

CONSIDER, first, that on all our festivals we should enter into the spirit of the solemnity, by aiming, as much as possible, at the dispositions which best correspond with the mysteries we celebrate. Thus, while we are preparing to keep the solemn feast of Pentecost, the great object of our devotion should be to prepare our souls for the Holy Ghost, who on this day came down upon the first christians; that so we also may be favored with his visit at this holy time, and plentifully partake of his choicest gifts and graces.

Consider, secondly, in what manner the apostles prepared themselves for the Holy Ghost, (Acts i. 14.) “They were persevering,” saith, the scripture, “with one mind in prayer.” And, (Luke xxiv. 53.) “They were always in the temple, praising and blessing God.” From the ascension of our Lord to Whitsunday, retired as much as might be from the hurry and distractions of a busy world, they attended in silence to God and religion; and as they were almost incessantly at prayer in the temple of God, the Holy Ghost was pleased to make their souls his temple and to dwell within them. Happy they who imitate their fervor.

Consider, thirdly, that the surest way to bring the Holy Ghost into our souls, is to invite him thither by ardent desires and fervent prayer. Thus the apostles were honored with his visit: and the Word of God in many places assures us, this is the way to arrive at all good. Our heavenly “Father will give his good spirit to all that ask him,” (Luke xi. 13.) “I wished,” says the wise man, (Wisdom vii. 7.) “and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me:” Come then, O Divine Spirit, into our longing souls, and bring with thee all thy heavenly treasures. Do thou prepare thyself a proper residence there, and take full possession of them for time and eternity.

Conclude with using all the means in your power to engage this Divine Spirit to visit you, and to abide forever with you. He willingly comes to those who sincerely and heartily invite him.

WHITSUN-EVE.

On the dispositions necessary for receiving the Holy Ghost.

CONSIDER, first, that the soul which desires to receive the Holy Ghost, must first be purified from wilful sin. If any person of distinction were to honor us with a visit, we should doubtless be solicitous to remove from his sight whatever might offend his eyes: how much more careful ought we to be, when we aspire to the happiness of engaging the spirit of God to abide with us and in us, to remove far from us the filth of sin, infinitely odious in his eyes. Alas! all the while the soul is under the guilt of mortal sin, not removed by true repentance and a sincere conversion to God, she is the den of unclean spirits. And can she expect a visit from the Holy Ghost in such company as this?

Consider, secondly, those words of the wise man, "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins," (Wisdom i. 4.) No: the spirit of God is the spirit of love, union, peace, and charity; and therefore, can never "enter into a malicious soul." He is the spirit of purity, and therefore cannot dwell in a body subject to *carnal* sins. Banish then far from you all uncharitableness and rancor against your neighbor; all wantonness and impurity, and every vice, if you hope to enjoy the presence of the Holy Ghost, and to partake of his heavenly consolation.

Consider, thirdly, the opposition there is between the spirit of God, and the spirit of the world. For as the love of the world, and its friendship, is the great enemy of the love of God, (James iv. 4.) (1 John ii. 15;) and of sensual pleasures, even to idolatry; full of disorderly affections and vicious attachments. The spirit of God cannot endure such idols as these in his temple.

Conclude absolutely to renounce your worldly affections, and whatever is an obstacle to the residence of the Holy Ghost within your soul.

WHITSUNDAY.

On the coming down of the Holy Ghost.

CONSIDER, first, that on the feast of Pentecost when the disciples were all assembled together, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were, of fire; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak," (Acts ii. 2, 3, 4.) Thus they received the promised Comforter, with all his gifts and graces, and were quite changed into other men. Weak and cowardly as they were before, they are now on a sudden firm and courageous, and boldly publish the faith and law of their crucified Saviour, to the conversion of thousands! O heavenly Spirit how wonderful are thy operations!

Consider, secondly, that the Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles in the shape of *tongues*; to signify that he came to make them fit preachers of his word, and to endow them with the gift of *tongues*, accompanied with heavenly wisdom and understanding of the mysteries of God, and all the truths of the gospel, to teach and publish throughout the world the faith and law of Christ. And these *tongues* were of *fire*; to signify how this divine Spirit inflames those souls in which he abides, with divine love.

Consider, thirdly, that the coming of the Holy Ghost was not promised to the apostles only, and the first christians; but was a blessing to be entailed on the people of God throughout all ages. "I will ask the Father; and he shall give you another Paraclete" (or comforter) "that he may abide with you for ever, the spirit of truth," (John xiv. 16, 17.) He was promised to be *for ever* with the pastors of God's church to guide them into all truth in points of doctrine; and to be for ever with the flock of Christ to guide them into all truth in their belief and practice. Christians, the Holy Ghost will come into your souls, no less really than he formerly did into those of the primitive disciples, if you remove the obstacles of sin.

Conclude with this humble address of the church to the Divine Spirit: "Come Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love;" and repeat with fervor this inflamed petition.

WHITSUN-MONDAY.

On the happiness of having the Holy Ghost in the soul.

CONSIDER, first, how happy is the soul which possesses the Holy Ghost. He is called in scripture the *Paraclete* (or comforter and solicitor) from the consolations and graces which he imparts to the soul, to sweeten all her crosses and labors in her mortal pilgrimage; and from his *soliciting* for her all necessary help, by the spirit of prayer which he inspires. He is by excellence "the gift of the Most High:" for what can God give better than himself: "The living fountain, or the fountain of living water, springing up to everlasting life," which extinguishes the thirst of earthly enjoyments, and waters the soul with the streams of grace; and he is called a fire, from the bright flames of love with which he inflames our breast.

Consider, secondly, the happy fruits which attend his sacred presence. (Gal. v. 22, 23.) 1. *Charity*, or the love of God above all things, for his own infinite goodness; and the love of every neighbor, for his sake;—which was so remarkable in the first christians, that they had "but one heart and one soul," (Acts iv. 32.)—2. *Joy*, from the testimony of a good conscience, and the experience of his sweetness—3. *Peace*, both with God, with our neighbor, and with ourselves; not granted to the wicked.—4. *Patience*, which makes our crosses light and easy.—5. *Benignity* or kindness, in relieving the distressed.—6. *Goodness*, or a constant desire to do good to all.—7. *Longanimity*, or perseverance in overcoming evil with good.—8. *Mildness*, in restraining anger and overlooking injuries.—9. *Fidelity*, both to God and our neighbors. 10. *Modesty*, or moderation in all things.—11. *Continency*, in restraining all irregular inclinations.—12. *Chastity*, in keeping both soul and body free from the defilements of lust.

Consider, thirdly, that as nothing can be more happy than to enjoy the presence of the Holy Ghost; so nothing can be more miserable than to be without him. Where the Spirit of God is not, there Satan is: and can there be a greater misery than to be possessed by Satan? "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ," says the apostle, (Rom. viii. 9.) "he is none of his." Whose, then, must he be? Ah, how true is that of the church in the hymn for Whitsuntide: "Without thy Deity all in man is sin!"

Conclude to neglect nothing in your power, to engage the Holy Ghost to fix his abode in you, and remain with you for ever. He will bring along with him all good.

WHITSUN-TUESDAY.

On the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

CONSIDER, first, what precious treasures the Spirit of God imparts to the soul, in which he chooses to abide. The prophet (Isaiah xi. 2, 3.) stiles him "the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding; the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude; the Spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and the fear of the Lord." O how precious indeed; how admirable are these gifts! What then is that wisdom which the Holy Ghost imparts? Not the wisdom of this world, which is downright folly in the sight of God, because it looks no farther than the transitory enjoyments of the present life. Not the wisdom of the philosophers, who study the secrets of Nature, but neglect to seek truth in its fountain, by the knowledge of God and of themselves: but that wisdom which alone deserves this glorious name, and which consists in the contemplation and love of the divine perfections, and in all its researches has God continually in view.

Consider, secondly, how precious also is the gift of *understanding*: it opens the eyes of the soul to the light of God; clearly discovers the emptiness of all temporal honors, riches, and pleasures; and convinces her, that nothing is truly great or worthy her affection, but that which is eternal. The gift of *counsel* points out the way to bliss, and warns us against the snares and artifices of our enemies: and the gift of *fortitude*, or heavenly courage, animates us to encounter all opposition from the world, the flesh and the devil, and renders us victorious in all our conflicts. Happy is the traveller who has such a guide, such a counsellor, such a powerful helper and protector!

Consider, thirdly, that *knowledge* instructs the soul in every virtue and every duty, and in all her advances towards a happy eternity. *Godliness* or *piety* makes us quite in earnest in the service of God, and cheerfully observe his law. And lastly, *the fear of the Lord*, which the scripture calls "the beginning of wisdom," makes us more afraid of offending God, than any other evil whatever. Are any treasures upon earth comparable to these?

Conclude highly to value these heavenly gifts, the least of which is worth more than all the world can give; and beg them daily of the Holy Spirit, who is most willing to listen to your prayers.

WHITSUN-WEDNESDAY.

On the means of keeping the Holy Ghost in the soul.

CONSIDER, first, that the soul which has been honored with a visit from the Holy Ghost, must endeavor to entertain him in a proper manner. For if she takes little notice of this heavenly guest, and quickly turns from him to attend to every idle and impertinent amusement; if she loves not frequently to converse with him by prayer, she will quickly lose him. He delights to be with them that delight to be with him; and expects a return of love. Therefore he withdraws himself from such souls as like not his company but give themselves up to wordly dissipation. Is not this too frequently our case, while we attend to every thing else but God.

Consider, secondly, that as the Spirit of God will not dwell in a soul that does not attend on him by recollection of thought, so neither will he dwell in a soul that does not serve him with "purity of heart." He will be sole master of the heart in which he chooses to reside: he will allow of no partner there. Christians, if then you pretend to have the happiness of being temples of the Holy Ghost, you must not admit of any idols in your souls. Let the object of your love be ever so innocent in itself, it is then no longer innocent, when it divides our affections between itself and God, and is not loved with reference to him. It becomes then impure; it defiles then the heart; and excludes the spirit of God, who will not dwell in any but a *clean heart*.

Consider, thirdly, that we must not only keep our soul, which is the spiritual temple of God, clean and undefiled; "for if any man violate the temple of God, him will God destroy," (1 Cor. iii. 17;) but we must also make it "a house of prayer," as the house of God should be. Here we must frequently worship the "spirit of truth, in spirit and truth." We must employ all the three powers of the soul, the will, the memory, and the understanding, in frequently attending upon our God; and his worship should be constantly going forward in this his temple. This is the true way to make him abide with us for ever.

Conclude to follow these methods, in order to entertain and to fix in your soul this heavenly guest, who will be your reward to eternity, *exceeding great*.

WHITSUN-THURSDAY.

On the marks of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

CONSIDER, first, that we may judge whether the Holy Ghost be in our soul, from his fruits. These are—"charity, joy, peace, patience," &c. If we have none of these fruits, he is not with us. What then is our love of God and our neighbor? Is it constant and fervent, or but weak and languishing? Does it make us rejoice in the divine will, and our neighbor's spiritual good; or rather, are we not equally indifferent to our neighbor's interests and to those of religion! This would be a certain proof that the Spirit of God has no place within our breast.

Consider, secondly, that there is an infinite opposition between the Spirit of God and wilful sin. Is it then your constant and settled resolution, for no wordly honor, interest, or pleasure; for no fear or love; for nothing that the world can give or take, ever to commit a wilful sin, and transgress the holy law of God? If so, the Holy Ghost is with you: but if you are not thus determined, Satan, his mortal enemy, has possession of your soul.

Consider, thirdly, that the Holy Ghost gives to the soul which he enlightens with his presence, a great sense of the enormity of sin, and of the multitude and greatness of her own sins in particular; and a sincere sorrow and repentance for them. He discovers many stains, where the soul perceived none, and humbles her exceedingly under her manifold guilt: he often convinces the soul of the *justice* of the christian dispensation, of the beauty of virtue, and of the pleasure and happiness of serving God in earnest. Again:—the Holy Ghost convinces the soul of the wrong judgment she has hitherto made in following the world and the prince of this world, who is already judged and condemned; and teaches her to rectify her former erroneous judgment of things, in order to a reformation of life; thus to escape the dreadful judgment of eternal death.

Conclude to examine well, by such marks as these, whether the Spirit of God be with you or not. If not, lament your misery with tears of repentance: for he will not "despise a contrite heart."

WHITSUN-FRIDAY.

On the sacrament of confirmation.

CONSIDER, first, that confirmation is a sacrament, by which the faithful, if duly disposed, receive the Holy Ghost, with his most precious gifts and graces, in order to make them strong and perfect christians. The apostles were confirmed in a wonderful manner, by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, on Whitsunday; but the rest of the faithful were to be confirmed through their ministry, and that of their successors the bishops of God's church, by imposition of hands and prayer, (Acts viii. 15, 17, 18, and xix. 6.) Give thanks to our Lord for this sacred institution, by means of which he continues in his church the mission of his Holy Spirit, and the communication of his graces.

Consider, secondly, that by confirmation we are made soldiers of Christ; we enlist ourselves under his banner, and receive the sacred mark of his *cross* on our foreheads—his sacred cross, which is the royal standard of all his troops. Here we engage to fight his battles against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and are furnished with proper arms for this glorious warfare. What then can we apprehend, having Christ for our captain, and his Holy Spirit for our guide, our strength, and our refuge? Eternal life is promised to the conquerors. "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life," (Apocal. ii. 10.)

Consider, thirdly, that in the sacrament of confirmation, the soul is in a particular manner dedicated to God, to be the temple of his Spirit. Christians, have you hitherto considered yourselves in this light? Have you reflected, that you were sanctified by the unction of the chrism, in the same manner as the altars and the temples of God are solemnly dedicated to his service? Remember, in future at least, that you are living "temples of the living God."

Conclude to set a high value upon the grace of your confirmation,—and live up to the glorious character you there received, and as becomes the soldiers of Christ.

WHITSUN-SATURDAY.*On the obligations of our confirmation.*

CONSIDER, first, that confirmation imprints in the soul a character of spiritual mark, which implies a certain consecration to the service of God, in quality of his soldier; as that of baptism marks us for the people of God, and that of holy orders

for his ministers. Hence these three sacraments can be received only once; because the character which they imprint, and which consecrates the soul to God, can never be forfeited. But then, these three sacraments bring with them a strict obligation of living up to this character and consecration, which they impart to the soul. And confirmation, in particular, obliges us to observe the whole discipline of the soldiers of Jesus Christ, and rather to die than to go over to the enemy by any wilful sin.

Consider, secondly, with what courage christians ought to embrace all the labors and sufferings to which their spiritual warfare exposes them, especially as they fight under the standard of so great a King, in his presence and company, and for so great a reward. But, alas! the soldiers of this world will, I fear, rise up in judgment and condemn us, for having done and suffered so little in the warfare of Christ, compared with what they have done and suffered in the warfare of the world.

Consider, thirdly, that what is once dedicated to God, cannot, without sacrilege be perverted to profane uses. Therefore, the soul which by the sacrament of confirmation has been consecrated to God, is strictly obliged to be always devoted to his service, both in quality of his *soldier*, and of his *temple*. O remember, that the character which you have received in this sacrament, cannot be cancelled either in this world or in the world to come,—and that it must be, to eternity, a mark of honor or reproach, according to the life you shall have led.

Conclude always to bear in mind the sacred character of your confirmation, as well as that of your baptism, that you may live up to the obligations of them both. Be not terrified at the difficulties of this warfare:* the grace of God will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, (1 Corinthians x. 13.)

TRINITY-SUNDAY.

On the blessed Trinity.

CONSIDER, first, that this principal mystery of the christian faith, which we call the mystery of the blessed Trinity, or of three distinct persons in one God, is the great object of our worship at all times. Every Sunday in the year might be called Trinity-Sunday; because every Sunday is set aside for the worship of this adorable Trinity, our Lord and our God. Yea all our time belongs to him. But this day is more particularly

*The bishop in confirming you, gave you a blow on the cheek, to signify the adversities you were to sustain; but at the same time gave you God's *peace*, to show that God would be with you in them all, and would never abandon you.

appointed by the church, after the other great festivals relating to our redemption and redemption by the three Divine Persons; in order to honor in a more particular manner this most sublime mystery of our religion.

Consider, secondly, that the Catholic doctrine of this mystery is, that there is one true and living God and no more; eternal, incomprehensible, almighty and infinite in all perfections. In this one God we believe three distinct persons, of the same substance and essence; perfectly equal in age, in power, in wisdom, in goodness, &c.: the *Father*, who proceeds from no other; the *Son*, who proceeds from the Father by an eternal and ineffable generation; and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, who proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. We believe, that these three are one, having all three the same godhead, that is the same divine nature. This is the Catholic belief of the most blessed Trinity, absolutely necessary to salvation.

Consider, thirdly, that our lives must also render proper homage to this adorable mystery. To be agreeable to the Trinity, we must be humble in mind and heart. "Heaven is my throne," saith the Lord, (Isai. lxvi. 1, 2.) "and the earth my footstool. My hand made all these things,—but to whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor, and little, and of a contrite spirit; and that trembleth at my words?"

Conclude to come daily before the throne of the eternal Trinity, with your best homage of faith, love, and humility. "Of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be glory for ever: Amen," (Rom. xi. 36.)

MONDAY AFTER TRINITY-SUNDAY.

On the figures of the blessed Eucharist.

CONSIDER, first, that the Old Testament was a figure of the New; and all the most remarkable events there recorded by the Spirit of God, have a prophetic relation to Christ, and his church of the New Testament. Thus the deliverance of the children of Israel from their Egyptian slavery, was a figure of the redemption of man by Christ, from the bondage of Satan and sin; and the means then appointed to be used as a preparation for that deliverance, were a figure of what was to be done by our Redeemer, for the deliverance of all mankind from a far worse slavery.

Consider, secondly, that the children of Israel, the night before their going out of Egypt, were commanded, (Exodus xii.) in all their families to offer in sacrifice an unspotted lamb, and to sprinkle their door-posts with its blood, as a sign for the

destroying angel, who slew that night all the first-born of Egypt, to pass by their houses. They were to eat the flesh of the lamb that same night with unleavened bread, in readiness immediately to take their journey. This unspotted lamb, first offered in sacrifice, and then eaten in a sacred and mysterious sign or sacrament, was a lively figure of Jesus Christ, the true lamb of God, offered up in sacrifice for our redemption; with the sprinkling of whose blood our souls are rescued from the power of Satan, and from the second death. We are commanded to eat his sacred flesh in the divine mysteries, as an earnest of the share we have in him and his sacrifice; as a mean of conveying grace to our souls; a pledge of our eternal happiness, and a preparation and viaticum for our journey out of the Egypt of this world, to the true land of promise, our heavenly country.

Consider, thirdly, that the paschal lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and wild lettuce; to signify the dispositions with which we ought to come to the christian passover. Christ is now our paschal lamb. "Therefore," says the apostle, (1 Cor. v. 8.) "let us feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Purity of intention, and a sincere desire of pleasing God alone, are signified by the unleavened bread; and by the wild lettuce is meant true repentance and sorrow for our sins, which has in it a wholesome bitterness. It was ordered that, in eating the paschal lamb they should have their loins girt, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands. Hence, if we would worthily approach the lamb of God in the sacred mysteries, we must gird up the loins of our soul, by restraining our passions and lusts; have our feet, that is, the affections of our soul "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," (Eph. vi. 15.) that is, with a readiness of heart always to follow the rules of the gospel, the only way to true peace; and hold our staves in our hands like pilgrims and travellers, hastening to our true country.

Conclude to frequent henceforward, with the utmost devotion and preparation, the great christian passover of the most blessed Eucharist.

TUESDAY AFTER TRINITY-SUNDAY.

On the manna and the bread of Elias.

CONSIDER, first, that the manna with which God fed the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness, (Ps. lxxvii.) was another figure of the blessed Eucharist. "Moses did not give you bread from heaven," says our Lord to the Jews, (John

vi.)—for the manna came down only from the clouds—“but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. As the living Father hath sent me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever,” (vers. 32, 51, 52, &c.)

Consider, secondly, that as the manna supported the people of God for forty years in the wilderness, but was no longer given when they were arrived at the land of promise; so the bread of the blessed Eucharist, is to be the food, nourishment, strength, and life of our souls, during our mortal pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world; till we come to the true land of promise. Here we shall see face to face, and fully enjoy life and truth itself, for all eternity.

Consider, thirdly, that this heavenly food was prefigured also by the *hearth-cake* with which the prophet Elias was fed by an angel, in the wilderness, while he fled from the persecution of Jezabel, (iii Kings xix.) In the strength of which he walked forty days and forty nights unto the mount of God Horeb, (v. 8.) Here he was favored with the vision of the Deity, as far as man is capable of in this life. We also, must flee from the contagion of a wicked world, as from the impious Jezabel; and we stand in need of the bread of heaven to support us on our way to the mountain of God. For we have “yet a great way to go,” as the angel said to Elias, before we arrive at this mountain of eternity.

Conclude to seek this heavenly bread, which is to support you during your mortal pilgrimage, in recollection of mind, and spiritual retirement from the hurry of dissipation and worldly pursuits.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TRINITY-SUNDAY.

On other figures of the blessed Eucharist.

CONSIDER, first, that the sacrifice of Melchisedec, (Gen. xiv. 18.) in bread and wine, was another figure of the sacrifice and sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist: and Melchisedec himself, and his priesthood was an illustrious figure of Christ and his eternal priesthood; as we learn from the Psalmist and St. Paul, (Ps. cix. 4, and Heb. vii.) Likewise in the law of Moses, all those sacrifices commonly called *peace-offerings*, in which both the priests and

the people partook of the victim, were also figures of Christ sacrificed for us, and received by us.

Consider, secondly, that God appointed twelve loaves, called the "holy bread" and the "loaves of proposition," made of fine flour, to stand always in his temple before the veil of the inward sanctuary; placed there upon a table for that purpose, overlaid with gold, "for a memorial of the oblation of the Lord, by an everlasting covenant, [Levit. xxiv. 5, &c.] They were a figure of that solemn offering to be afterwards daily made under the form of bread, with the greatest devotion, in the Church of Christ.

Consider, thirdly, that the tree of life planted in the midst of the earthly paradise, [Gen. ii. 9.] was also a figure of the blessed sacrament. If sin had not banished us from that happy abode, we should have been maintained by its fruit in constant health, and have never died. Thus the holy sacrament preserves the soul in constant health, and will one day bring her to the enjoyment of a happy immortality.

Conclude, from all these ancient figures, so noble and expressive, to raise your thoughts and hearts above this earth and all that is earthly, in the use of this heavenly sacrament.

CORPUS-CHRISTI DAY.

On the institution of the blessed Eucharist.

CONSIDER, first, that our Lord, when "his hour was now come that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world," says the beloved disciple, [John xiii. 1.] "loved them unto the end;" and gave them, in the last stage of his life, the most evident tokens of his boundless love, both by his sufferings, and also by the institution of the blessed eucharist, in which "we might abide in him and he in us," [John vi. 57.] to the end of time! O how wonderful and endearing are the ways of his divine love!

Consider, secondly, that in this sacred legacy is contained an inexhausted source of divine grace; the living bread, the remedy of all our evils, the manna of heaven, the most powerful medicine for all our diseases, the sovereign antidote against the poison of the infernal serpent; the comfort of our banishment, the great sacrifice and sacrament of the New Testament; spirit, truth, and life itself:—in a word, so rich a present, that heaven can give us nothing greater.

Consider, thirdly, that our dear Redeemer had no other motive in communicating himself in this wonderful manner to us, his unworthy creatures, than his own pure goodness: that thus he might be always with us; for his delight is to be with the

children of men, in order to show forth in us the riches of his bounty. O ye heavens, be astonished at this effort of divine beneficence, and at the base ingratitude of men, in making so wretched a return!

Conclude, to be ever thankful for this unspeakable benefit of the institution of the blessed sacrament and sacrifice of the altar; and celebrate, with the Catholic Church, the memory of it, in the most grateful manner possible.

FRIDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

On the mysteries contained in the blessed Eucharist.

CONSIDER, first, that the blessed Eucharist, being the most excellent of all the sacraments, contains more and greater mysteries than any of the rest. In it our Lord gives himself to us in quality of our *food*; that as sin, and death, and all our miseries came to us originally by eating the forbidden fruit; so grace, and life, and all our good, may come to us by *eating* of this *life-giving bread*, which he has commanded us to eat. His body having all the qualities of bread in regard to our souls, this form is the most proper to express that true *living bread* which it contains; namely, the true and *real body* of Christ, "which came down from heaven for the life of the world," [John vi.] It also admirably expresses the mystical body of Christ, which is his church, and the union of concord and charity of all its true members. "We being many, are one bread, one body; all that partake of one bread," [1 Cor. x. 17.]

Consider, secondly, that by the separate consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the true Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, presents himself to his Father upon our altars, under the figure of death; that is, under the sacramental veils, which represent his body delivered up and slain, and his blood shed for us. Thus the whole passion and death of Christ is solemnly exhibited by himself in person, and is shown forth in such a manner, as not only to be renewed in our remembrance, but also to bring forth in us the fruit of life.

Consider, thirdly, that by partaking of the body and blood of Christ, we have an assurance of sharing in his redemption, and in the sacrifice of his cross. We are mystically incorporated with him, and partake of his spirit. We are admitted to drink of that blood, which is the seal of the new covenant; importing the remission of our sins, and all graces and blessings, through his death. In a word, we receive a most certain pledge of a happy resurrection and everlasting life, from HIM

who thus lovingly gives himself to us, even in this place of banishment.

Conclude, always to approach with great reverence and love, to these mysteries, so full of majesty and of love.

SATURDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist.

CONSIDER, first, that the real presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ is taught expressly, both by holy scripture, and by the Church of God against which "the gates of HELL shall not prevail," [Matt. xvi. 18.] Upon these two pillars of truth, the word of God and the Church of God, the humble and faithful christian rests secure. He knows that the Almighty can do infinitely more than man can comprehend, and that his love for us is boundless: and this abundantly suffices.

Consider, secondly, that our most merciful Lord came down from heaven to carry us up to heaven, and to make us partakers of his divinity. He offered up his flesh and blood in sacrifice for us upon the cross; and he gives us in this holy sacrament, verily and indeed, the same flesh and blood, to be our food, our comfort and support in this life; and will give HIMSELF to us for all eternity, hereafter! What can he do more to testify his love?

Consider, thirdly, with what sentiments of the most profound humility, and of fear when we call to mind our sins and unworthiness;—of sorrow and contrition; of gratitude and love, ought we to approach the heavenly mysteries! To think, that the Lord of Glory, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who cannot endure iniquity, should nevertheless vouchsafe to visit us, and lovingly to give himself to us in this most blessed sacrament, requiring only in return, that we should love him with our whole heart, and be sorry for our offences.

Conclude, to admire and adore his infinite goodness and love; and endeavor by a lively faith to raise in your soul the same affections, which you would have if you saw him with your mortal eyes.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

On Christ's inviting us to this heavenly banquet.

CONSIDER, first, the words of the parable of this day's gospel, "a certain man made a great supper, and invited many," [Luke xiv. 16.] This man is no other than the Son of God; and he invites to this great supper all the faithful, in the most loving manner. "Come to me all ye that labor and are burdened; and I will refresh you," [Matt. xi. 28.] Christians, we all labor and lie under many and very heavy burdens, from the sins and miseries to which we are here exposed; and can expect relief from none but Christ.

Consider, secondly, how much our Lord is offended by all those who reject this loving invitation. He has prepared this feast out of pure love: he desires, out of pure love, to impart himself and all his precious gifts to us; and therefore justly represents our contempt of his goodness; our preferring the farm, the oxen, the wife; in a word, the world, and the things of the world, before him and his heavenly banquet.

Consider, thirdly, that by neglecting to receive the blessed sacrament, we not only neglect his invitation, and slight his love; but also break through his ordinance, and violate his commandment. He himself assures us, that without this heavenly food we "shall not have life in us," [John vi. 54.] and, as we should be guilty of self-murder by refusing necessary sustenance to our body; so should we be guilty of murdering our soul, by refusing it its life-giving support.

Conclude with a resolution frequently and worthily to receive the holy communion. It is called our daily bread in that prayer which our Lord himself has taught us. Oh! that, like the ancient Christians, we were worthy to partake daily of this heavenly food.

MONDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

On the excellent fruits of this divine banquet.

CONSIDER, first, that in all the sacraments, but particularly in this [for it contains the very source itself] the worthy receiver partakes plentifully of divine grace. This is that "bread which strengthens the heart of man:" [Psalms ciii. 15.] it gives us force against all temptations: it weakens our passions; it enables us to improve daily in virtue, and to run forward with alacrity in the way of all the divine commandments, till we arrive at the very perfection of a christian life.

Consider, secondly, that this heavenly sacrament tends, in a particular manner, to unite us by a "union of love" with our sovereign good, and to transform us into Christ himself. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." The corporeal food which we take is changed into our corporal substance; whereas this spiritual food is not changed into us, but by its heavenly flame it sets our souls on fire, and transforms us into itself!

Consider, thirdly, that the best disposition for this happy change and blessed union of love, is to approach to this divine sacrament with an entire submission and resignation of ourselves, and of our whole being, into the hands of him, whom we desire to receive. If we wish this perfect union to take place between our souls and our Beloved, we must surrender all to Him: we cannot otherwise be his true disciples, but by resigning ourselves with all our affections to his divine pleasure.

Conclude to give all for all, if you hope to relish the fruits of this heavenly sacrament.

TUESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

On the dispositions required to receive worthily.

CONSIDER, first, those words of St. Paul, (1 Cor. xi. 28.) "Let a man prove himself;" that is, let him look well into the state of his conscience, and rectify his whole interior, and "so eat of that bread;" lest, by approaching unworthily, he be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," (verse 27;) and receive judgment and condemnation, "not discerning the body of the Lord," (verse 29.)

Consider, secondly, that it is a most grievous sacrilege to profane this most holy of all the sacraments, by approaching it under the guilt of mortal sin. A soul under this dreadful guilt is possessed by devils. The unworthy communicant, therefore, introduces the Lord of Glory into a den of unclean spirits. Ah! what floods of tears would be required to expiate so great a guilt!

Consider, thirdly, that we ought not to content ourselves with merely being pure from mortal sin, but should also, as much as possible, lay aside all affection to venial sins, and all habits of such sin, which very much diminish the grace of this divine sacrament. Ah, Christians! could we but see those spots, those stains, that leprosy highly offensive to God,—of anger, impatience, curiosity, vanity, and the like,—we should

be sensible how much they disqualify us for the embraces of our heavenly spouse.

Conclude, to approach the holy sacrament with purity of conscience, at least from all known and deliberate sin, and from all inordinate affections—and you will not fail to be a welcome guest.

WEDNESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

On devotion before communion.

CONSIDER, first, that the ground-work of our preparation for communion, must be a lively faith, and a serious consideration of what we are about; who it is we are to receive; how great and glorious, how pure and holy! And who *we* are, that are going to receive him; how wretched, poor, and miserable! This consideration must be accompanied with earnest prayer.

Consider, secondly, that a most profound humility and awful reverence for these sacred mysteries, must be a part of our preparation. How ought we to annihilate ourselves in the sight of this great Lord and Maker of heaven and earth! How ought we to tremble by reason of our manifold offences and unworthiness. But this fear must be qualified with an humble confidence in his goodness and mercy.

Consider, thirdly, that as nothing but pure love brings our Lord to us in this divine sacrament; so, what he principally expects from us, when we approach to him, is a return of love. In whatever light we consider these sacred mysteries, all things in them call for our love. Can we then remain cold, when we approach to so great a fire? Can we see so much love on the part of our Lord, and not be inflamed with a desire of loving him with all our power?

Conclude to exercise yourself before communion, in acts of faith, reverence, and humility; in acts of hope and divine love, with the deepest sense of your Saviour's infinite bounty and goodness.

THURSDAY THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

On devotion after communion.

CONSIDER, first, that devotion is not less necessary after than before communion. The happy moments, during which the soul has really present with her our blessed Saviour, both in

his divine and human nature, must be well employed. It would be a gross affront to the King of heaven, after receiving him into our own poor lodging, to take no farther notice of his gracious presence. The very meanest of our friends would resent such ill usage. Alas! May not this be the true cause why you reap so little fruit from your frequent communions; which otherwise might long ago have made you a saint?

Consider, that devotion after communion is exercised by acts of faith, hope, and love. 1. By a lively faith of all divine mysteries, especially of the actual presence of Christ in our souls to enrich them with his graces: 2. by a firm hope in his infinite goodness, which disdains not to visit us in this sacrament of love: 3. by an ardent charity, aspiring with all affection to an eternal union with our Beloved. But all this ought to be accompanied with a lively sense of our unworthiness.

Consider, thirdly, that the soul must also offer herself and all she possesses, without reserve, into his hands, to be forever his. In a word, she must remember that she is now before the throne of grace, and that the Lord whom she has with her, is himself the fountain of divine grace; and therefore she must lay before him all her wants, and those of the whole church, with an humble confidence of redress.

Conclude to entertain your Saviour in this manner, as often as you receive him in the divine mysteries; and take care to be more than ordinarily recollected the whole day following, and more upon your guard against all sin.

When the Octave of Corpus Christi falls before the thirteenth of June; the meditations wanting in this place, must be supplied from those omitted in February on account of Lent.

JUNE 14.

Of the blessed Eucharist as it is a sacrifice.

CONSIDER, first, that *sacrifice* is a sovereign act of religion due to God alone, as the sovereign Lord of all things, and the absolute Master of life and death. The children of God from the beginning offered sacrifices to him in their solemn worship, when they met to pay to him their homage and adoration. In the old law a great variety of these sacrifices was prescribed, all of them figures only, and imperfect shadows of the great sacrifice of the law of grace, which we celebrate in the blessed Eucharist: a sacrifice in which the Son of God himself is both priest and victim.

Consider, secondly, that the ancient sacrifices being but figures, have given way to the reality, that is to the new sacrifice

of Christ's institution; which is no other than that of his own body and blood, once exhibited in a bloody manner upon the altar of the cross; daily, to the end of the world, in an unbloody manner, on our altars, under the forms of bread and wine, agreeably to the priesthood and sacrifice of Melchisedek who offered in bread and wine, (Gen. xiv. 18.) And this new sacrifice of the christian church: this clean offering to be "offered in every place among the Gentiles," is foretold by the prophet Malachy, (i. 11.) and accepted by the Lord, who declares he will receive no more of the Jewish sacrifices, (v. 10.)

Consider, thirdly, that this great sacrifice of the Eucharist essentially consists in the consecration or change of the bread and wine, into the body and blood of Christ; and in the offering of the same body and blood to God, by the ministry of the priest, as a perpetual memorial of the sacrifice of the cross, and a continuation of it to the end of the world, for all the ends and intentions of sacrifice. Not as if there were any insufficiency in his sacrifice of the cross, by which he completely redeemed us; but that we might thus have a standing memorial of our redemption, a daily mean of applying the fruit of it to our souls, and a daily communion with one another and with our great high priest and victim Christ Jesus; till we come to God with him and through him.

Conclude, daily to frequent, at least in spirit, this great mean of salvation, prepared for us in the Eucharistic sacrifice.

JUNE 15.

On the excellence of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

CONSIDER, first, that the excellence and dignity of a sacrifice, is to be estimated by the excellence and dignity of the victim offered, of the priest who makes the offering, and of the ends for which it is made. All these are in the highest degree excellent in the sacrifice of the blessed Eucharist, which in substance is the same with that offered by the Son of God himself upon the cross; because both the victim is the same, and the chief priest is the same: and both the one and the other answer the same ends, though in a different manner.

Consider, secondly, that the Son of God, in this adorable sacrifice, presents himself attended by his heavenly host, as the high priest of heaven and earth, and solemnly offers his body as slain, and his blood as shed; *a sacrifice* of sovereign *adoration* and homage to God on high; of general *thanksgiving* for our creation, our preservation, our redemption, &c.; for his own great glory, and for the whole church of heaven and

earth: of general *propitiation* for the sins of the living and the dead; and lastly of supplication for his whole family; that is, for his whole church, both pastors and people; that all graces and blessings may be derived to their souls from the fountains of their common Saviour.

Consider, thirdly, that in this divine sacrifice we present ourselves at the altar of God, before the throne of his mercy, with Jesus Christ his Son at our head, and in the society of his family the whole people of God, wherever they are, (for this sacrifice is offered by Jesus Christ in the name of them all.) By the hands of this our high-priest, and with the concurrence of his whole church, we here offer to God the most acceptable victim that can be presented to his Divine Majesty; the most agreeable adoration and thanksgiving; the most powerful atonement for sin, and the most effectual mean to obtain all graces and blessings.

Conclude, with the most lively devotion to join with the principal offerer Jesus Christ, and with his whole church, according to all these sublime ends of sacrifice.

JUNE 16.

On the blessed Eucharist as it is a sacrifice of adoration and praise.

CONSIDER, first, the obligation incumbent on man, as a reasonable creature made by God and for God, to present his homage of adoration, praise, and glory, to his Maker. For this reason sacrifices were offered from the beginning, to the Deity: for this reason the psalms were composed by divine inspiration, and appointed to be sung (accompanied with musical instruments) to the praise and glory of God, while the sacrifices were offered at his temple.

Consider, secondly, that as there is no proportion between a finite being and that which is infinite, therefore the whole creation, compared to God, is less than a grain of chaff compared with an earthly monarch, or even with the whole universe. How mean, then, is all that man can offer of his own! how unworthy, and inadequate of itself, to be made a sacrifice of adoration and praise to the Divine Majesty! Infinitely therefore are we obliged to the Son of God, for having furnished us, by the institution of the blessed Eucharist, with a sacrifice of adoration, praise, and glory worthy of God, through which alone the ancient sacrifices were acceptable.

Consider, thirdly, that our Lord, expiring upon the cross in obedience to his Father's will, offered himself in such manner, that his death is both a *sin offering*, or a sacrifice of propitia

tion for the sins of the world, and also of the nature of a *burnt offering*, (in which the whole victim was given to God without reserve,) or a sacrifice of adoration and glory. And, as in the blessed Eucharist, Christ himself personally celebrates his own death, and offers the same sacrifice in substance, with that of the cross; so we have here the same adoration, homage and praise, offered by Christ as high-priest of God and man, to his heavenly Father: and thus, by joining with him, we are enabled to offer daily an homage and adoration of infinite value.

Conclude with admiration of the infinite power, wisdom and goodness of God, in the institution of this divine sacrifice; and assist at it with all possible devotion.

JUNE 17.

On the Eucharist as it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

CONSIDER, first, that we owe to God infinite thanks for his boundless favors; namely, our creation, our redemption, our preservation, our vocation to the Catholic faith, and his other numberless benefits; but, above all, that eternal free love of his, which is the source of all his benefits. And what have we of our own stock with which to cancel this immense debt?

Consider, secondly, that none but the Son of God could offer for us a worthy thanksgiving to his Father. This sacrifice of thanks he actually offered once upon the cross, and now offers daily in the Eucharist, upon a million of altars throughout the world; and in this offering he expects his whole family of heaven and earth should join; that with him and through him they may daily make a due return for all the divine blessings, conferred upon his sacred humanity, and upon them.

Consider, thirdly, that, besides the special favors which each one in particular has received, we are to thank God in the sacrifice of the blessed Eucharist, for his own great glory manifested in all his works, especially in that of our redemption; for the incarnation and birth of his Son—his life, his death, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension; likewise for all the benefits, conferred or *to be* conferred through him, upon ourselves and upon his church, both militant, triumphant, and patient.

Conclude thus daily to unite your intentions with those of Jesus Christ, in this most holy sacrifice; and you will offer a thanksgiving worthy of God.

JUNE 18.

On the blessed Eucharist, as it is a sacrifice of propitiation.

CONSIDER, first, that the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ is also a *sin offering*, or a sacrifice of propitiation, for obtaining mercy and pardon for our sins. For this end did the Son of God take a body and blood; substituting this new victim of infinite value, instead of those of the old law, which of themselves were of no effect towards the expiation of sin. Without this blood of the new testament, once shed upon the cross, and daily in a mystical sense upon our altars, man had been lost without recovery.

Consider secondly, what an advantage it is to our souls, to have here daily celebrated amongst us this propitiatory sacrifice. What sinner can despair (if like the prodigal son he desires to return home to his true Father) when he sees here before him, bleeding as it were upon the altar, the victim by whose blood all our sins were cancelled? When he sees the great high-priest of God and man offering himself a sacrifice for the remission of our sins? "Let us go therefore with confidence to this throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid," (Heb. iv. 16.)

Consider, thirdly, how great is our debt to divine justice for our numberless sins! Alas! neither *holocausts*, nor *thousands of rams*, nor yet our own blood could expiate our guilt. The blood of Christ alone can do it: and with this we kneel before the Most High, when we assist at the sacrifice of the altar. This blood is here applied to our souls; and we are authorised to join in this sacred act, all in a body, with our great advocate and Mediator at our head, to plead for mercy through this same blood,—not for ourselves alone, but also for our brethren both living and dead.

Conclude, to embrace this great mean of obtaining mercy and grace, by assisting daily, if in your power, at the propitiatory sacrifice, with a contrite and humble heart.

JUNE 19.

On the blessed Eucharist as it is a sacrifice of prayer and supplication.

CONSIDER, first, that this sacrifice of the new law answers also most perfectly the intention of the ancient *peace offerings*, being offered up in order to obtain all graces and blessings from God, through the blood of our Redeemer. "No one can

come to the Father but *by* him," (John xvi. 6.) In this holy sacrifice we approach to God both *by* and *with* him, as our priest and as our victim. How wholesome, then, must this sacrifice of supplication be to all christian people, in which we not only ask in the name of Jesus Christ, but come with his sacred blood before the throne of grace; and in which he himself pleads for us in person.

Consider, secondly, that of ourselves we can do nothing: we can neither believe, hope, love, nor repent, nor make so much as one step towards our justification or salvation, without the help of Heaven. We are truly "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," of ourselves: but in this sacrifice we have an inexhausted fund of grace, to answer all our necessities and to redress all our miseries.

Consider, thirdly, that in this sacrifice of supplication and prayer, we are not to ask for ourselves alone; but we are authorised to put up our petitions (with Jesus Christ our great high-priest and the mediator between God and man) for the whole church and for the salvation of all mankind; that all infidels, heretics and sinners, may be converted,—abuses corrected,—and vicious habits reformed; that we may be preserved from public and from private calamities; and that, "being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we may serve God without fear, in holiness and justice before him, all our days." (Luke i.)

Conclude to spend to the best advantage, these favorable moments when you assist at this most holy sacrifice, the fountain's head of divine grace.

JUNE 20.

On devotion towards the holy sacrifice.

CONSIDER, first, that profound respect, with which the people of God, in ancient times, revered the sanctuary, in which was deposited the ark of the covenant. None but the high-priest (and he but once a year) was allowed to enter within the veil. How much more profoundly ought you to reverence this true sanctuary of God, and the Lord of the covenant himself, present in our tremendous mysteries!

Consider, secondly, that Jesus Christ here officiates in person, and acts, as in a sacred tragedy, his whole passion and death. Had we been present with a true belief in him, "when he was offering upon the cross the sacrifice of our redemption, with what sentiments of love and gratitude,—with what deep sense of sorrow and repentance for our sins,—should we have then attended! With the like sentiments should we assist at

this divine sacrifice, the same in substance, with the sacrifice of the cross, though different in the manner of offering.

Consider, thirdly, that in this sacred action we must also present to God the Father, his beloved Son slain for us, and his precious blood poured out for our salvation; and we must offer ourselves also to him, with the whole church, which is the mystical body of his Son, by his hands, and in union with the offering which Christ our head makes of himself. We must likewise join our intentions with his, as he is our chief priest and principal offerer, and with those of the whole people of God—of adoration, praise and thanksgiving, and of supplication for ourselves and all mankind. Thus the whole church daily joins with Jesus Christ, her glorious spouse.

Conclude to assist, as often as possible, at this great sacrifice, with the same fervor as if you were attending your Saviour on Mount Calvary.

JUNE 21.

On a spiritual communion.

CONSIDER, first, that all the assistants ought to join with the priest, and with Jesus Christ, in offering this great sacrifice, for all the four ends of sacrifice. It were to be wished, they would also join with the priest in the communion, by communicating at least spiritually as often as they hear mass. A spiritual communion made with proper devotion, brings Jesus Christ into our souls in spirit, and confers upon us plentiful graces, though we do not actually receive the sacrament.

Consider, secondly, that as Jesus Christ will not unite himself to a soul in which Satan dwells, in order to make this spiritual communion with fruit, we must, in the first place, be in the state of grace; moreover, we must invite him into our souls by a lively faith of his real presence upon our altars; an ardent desire of this bread of life; profound humility, and inflamed affections of love.

Consider, thirdly, that we may make a spiritual communion with advantage, not only when we assist at the sacrifice of the altar, but at any time or moment of the day or night, by the exercise just mentioned: only give yourself at all times to your true lover; and he will not fail to communicate himself to you. What can you desire better, than thus to enjoy at all times the most gracious company of your Lord?

Conclude to repeat this exercise every day of your life, and often in the day; the oftener the better.

JUNE 22.

On the sacrament of penance.

CONSIDER, first, that the infinite goodness of God, pitying our great frailty, instituted the sacrament of penance for the forgiveness of the sins to which we are liable after baptism; as a plank by which we may still escape, after the shipwreck of mortal sin, to the shore of eternal life. Embrace, O christian, this infinite goodness of your God. Alas! what must have become of you, after so many sins, if he had not ordained for you this wholesome remedy!

Consider, secondly, that Jesus Christ, to whom "all power is given in heaven and earth, was pleased to impart one branch of this power to his apostles and their lawful successors in the ministry, in these words: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained," (John xx. 21, &c.) This absolution of penitent sinners we call the "sacrament of penance." And a sacrament it is; for it is an outward sign of inward grace; even of the grace of pardon of our sins; "by virtue of the institution of Jesus Christ," ascertained in the ample commission above rehearsed. A commission which comes to the church sealed with the broad seal of heaven, from Him who holds in his hands the whole power of heaven: a commission, unlimited to time or place, which makes no exception of any sin whatever; provided the sinner applies with proper dispositions, to the power of the *keys*, granted by Christ to his Church, (Matthew xvi.)

Consider, thirdly, that the sacrament of penance, besides the absolution given by the minister of Christ, in his name, and by his authority, requires also on the part of the penitent, sincere *contrition*, together with *confession* and *satisfaction* at least in desire; without which the priest's absolution will be of no effect but to our condemnation. *Confession* is a full and sincere accusation of ourselves, as to the kind and number of our sins, to the pastors of the church, who have received from Christ the charge of our souls. *Contrition* is a hearty sorrow for having offended so good a God, with a full determination, by the help of his grace, not to be guilty of the like in future. *Satisfaction* is a faithful performance of the penance enjoined by them for our sins.

Conclude highly to value this sacred institution, and duly and speedily to apply to it, when you have fallen into sin.

JUNE 23.

On the confession of our sins.

CONSIDER, first, that God always expected from sinners an humble confession of their sins. This he prescribed in the old law, (Numb. v. 6, 7.) "When a man or woman commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty, then they shall confess the sin which they have done," &c. This was ordained in the new law, by the very institution of the sacrament of penance, which necessarily includes or presupposes confession. It was signified by that ordinance of the law, (Levit. xiii, xiv.) by which persons infected with the leprosy, a figure of sin, were to show themselves to the priests, and be under their inspection and direction. It was practised in the time of St. John Baptist, (Matt. iii. 6.) and of the apostles, (Acts xix. 18. James v. 16.) and was always insisted upon in the church of Christ: and what more just, than thus to humble ourselves for our pride and rebellion against God by sin?

Consider, secondly, the advantages of this Catholic practice of humbly confessing our sins to the ministers of Christ, whom he has bound by all laws to a perpetual secrecy. It procures proper medicines and prescriptions for the diseases of our soul, which we here lay open to our spiritual physician: it supplies us with counsel in our doubts, comfort in our sorrows, remedies against temptations: it gives present ease to the wounded conscience; rectifies our errors; enlightens our ignorance; restrains our passions: It gives strength and resolution to do better for the time to come; and what is one of its greatest advantages, it humbles the soul, and teaches us to know and despise ourselves. Advantages far greater than the momentary confusion of declaring our sins.

Consider, thirdly, that the chief of all the advantages of an humble and sorrowful confession of sins is, its being the means of divine appointment for obtaining pardon and absolution of all our crimes, and of restoring us to the friendship and the grace of God, by virtue of the commission given by Jesus Christ to his ministers; with a solemn asseveration that "whatsoever they should bind upon earth, should be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever they should loose upon earth, should be loosed also in heaven," (Matt. xviii. 18.) How happy would that criminal account himself, who might escape the hand of justice by a sorrowful acknowledgment of all his crimes in secret to his judge, or to one appointed by him! How much more happy is the penitent christian, when by an humble confession of all his sins, with sincere repentance, to the minister of Jesus Christ, he is assured of being delivered, not out of the hands of men who can only kill the body,

but out of the hands of the living God who otherwise will cast both body and soul into hell: and not only of being delivered out of the hands of divine justice; but of being received into the arms of his loving kindness, and made once more a friend and even a child of God, and heir of his eternal kingdom!

Conclude with hearty thanks for this divine institution, to which are annexed so many graces and blessings. But beware of using it as a mere ceremony, without any true change of heart.

JUNE 24.

On the nativity of St. John the Baptist.

CONSIDER, first, the glorious testimony given by our blessed Redeemer, of St. John. He tells us, "there hath not risen among them that are born of women, a greater than John the Baptist. He was a burning and a shining light," (John v. 35.) The special "friend of the bridegroom," (chap. iii. 29.) "The angel sent before his face to prepare his way," (Matt. xi. 10.) A prophet, and more than a prophet, (v. 9.) An apostle "sent from God for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him," (John i. 6, 7.) A martyr, a zealous preacher, a model of purity and holiness of life.

Consider, secondly, that in other saints the church honors the day of their departure out of this transitory life, which she celebrates as their birth-day to eternal life. But in St. John, his temporal birth also is honored; because he was sanctified in his mother's womb, and his first appearance to the world, sitting till then in the darkness and in the shades of death; was like the first dawning of the new day-light, which the Son of God, whose forerunner he was, was about to shed amongst us.

Consider, thirdly, that "it is good for a man when he hath borne the sweet yoke of the Lord from his youth," (Lament. iii. 27.) St. John retired very young from the corruptions and distractions of the world: "The child grew," says St. Luke (i. 80,) "and was strengthened in spirit, and was in the deserts until his manifestation to Israel." Happy they, who imitate this early piety of the Baptist!

Conclude to follow St. John into the wilderness, by retiring at least from the wicked ways of the world, and from the company and conversation of its slaves.

JUNE 25.

On the lessons taught us by the Baptist.

CONSIDER, first, that the life of St. John in the wilderness was one continued exercise of prayer and penance. These exercises we all must learn and practice, if we wish to enjoy the reward of eternal bliss. We must, like St. John, frequently and fervently raise our hearts to God, even in the midst of our daily employments, and every day give some time to the holy exercise of prayer. We must do penance daily, by retrenching all excess in eating, drinking, sleeping, clothing, and unnecessary amusements; and contradict our darling inclinations.

Consider, secondly, how little St. John was in his own eyes, and unworthy to do the meanest office to him who was to follow; and how glad he was, when he saw himself lessened in the opinion of the world by the preaching and miracles of Jesus. O blessed humility, which alone art capable of making any one truly great before the Lord: without thee all other virtues degenerate into vice!

Consider, thirdly, the great zeal of St. John the Baptist. He preached to sinners of all descriptions the necessity of renouncing effectually their evil ways, and of bringing forth worthy fruits of penance: he denounced the heavy judgments of God to the impenitent, but encouraged the penitent to hope in his mercy. Christians, let us attend to these important lessons, and be willing, with John, even to lay down our lives, rather than offend against justice and truth.

Conclude to attend to the preaching and example of St. John, and he will conduct you securely to Christ.

JUNE 26.

On preparation for confession.

CONSIDER, first, that the raising up of a soul, dead to God by mortal sin, is no less a miracle of the divine power, than the calling Lazarus out of his grave, after he had been four days dead and buried. Therefore, the sinner who desires to have this miracle wrought in his favor, by means of the sacrament of confession, must earnestly beg it of HIM who alone can raise the dead to life, and who has instituted penance, in order to restore the life of grace to the worthy receiver. The most essential conditions are—a change of heart, and a perfect sincerity in the accusation of ourselves, even of those sins of which we are most ashamed: and who but God can give us these dispositions?

Consider, secondly, that we must then seriously examine the true state of our interior. Alas! it is one of our greatest misfortunes not to know ourselves: and it is to be feared that many pass their whole lives under the guilt of mortal sins—of pride, envy, hatred, detraction, neglect of essential duties, &c. which, for want of sincere examination of themselves, they neither confess, nor repent of, nor amend. Hence their confessions are null, their communions sacrilegious, and they live and die in their sins. O my soul, see this be not thy misfortune.

Consider, thirdly, that the most essential part, both of the virtue and of the sacrament of penance, is contrition, or a hearty sorrow for our sins, with a firm purpose of amendment and of making satisfaction for past offences. This we must labor to procure by serious considerations of the most moving truths, and by repeated and fervent prayer; and never cease to implore the divine mercy, till God is pleased to touch our hearts.

Conclude to be diligent in all these particulars, lest, instead of cancelling by confession, you increase your debt.

JUNE 27.

On motives of repentance.

CONSIDER, first, that mortal sin is infinitely odious to God, and infinitely pernicious to our souls. It makes them like very devils in *his* eyes: it deprives *us* of grace, the true life of the soul, and of all our good: it is a poison which brings present death, and condemns us to a second and eternal death. It leaves behind it a dreadful stain, which endless ages and the flames of hell will never be able to efface. Ah, my poor soul! if thou couldst see thyself as thou art in the state of mortal sin, the sight alone would strike thee dead!

Consider, secondly, that wilful sinners are slaves of the devil; they are possessed by him. They have made God their enemy, who holds the thread of their life in his hand: if he breaks it, in that moment they drop into hell. Death is always advancing apace; and a sudden, or at least an unprovided death, is generally the reward of their presumption. Thousands of them daily go down into the bottomless pit, "where the worm never dies, and the fire is never extinguished," (Mark ix. 43.) Ah! who can bear everlasting fire! Detest then all mortal sin, which can and will, without repentance, condemn you to hell.

Consider, thirdly, that sin makes a dreadful separation between the soul and God; which is begun here but extends to all

eternity. "You are not my people," says he, (Osee i. 9.) "and I will not be your God." How much then does that evil deserve our detestation, which robs us of an infinite good, for eternity; and in exchange gives us nothing but endless and unspeakable evils.

Conclude in earnest to return to God by penance and a true conversion; and he will be yours for ever.

JUNE 28.

Other motives of contrition.

CONSIDER, first, that God is our first beginning and our last end: he has given us our being out of pure love; he has thought of us from all eternity, and has made us for himself, in the enjoyment of a happy eternity. In the mean time, he is always showering upon us his benefits: he watches over us by his providence; preserves us from numberless evils; has appointed his angels to wait upon us; and has sent his only Son from heaven to redeem us. He has mercifully cleansed us from sin in baptism, made us children and heirs to his kingdom; has given us an early knowledge of himself and of his heavenly truths; favored us with abundant graces beyond thousands of others; admitted us to his sacraments; borne with our repeated crimes for so many years; and, notwithstanding our ingratitude, has been still our constant benefactor. Alas! how many are now burning in the flames of hell for fewer sins than we have committed! Ah! let us then detest our sinful life, and henceforward, at least, be dutiful children to so tender a father.

Consider, secondly, what dreadful torments our Redeemer endured for you in his passion and death! Call over in your mind the particulars of his sufferings, from his agony and sweat of blood, even to his expiring upon the cross; and learn from the multitude and variety of his torments, an ardent love of him and hatred of your sins, for the expiation of which he freely died.

Consider, thirdly, that God is infinitely "good in himself," infinitely charming, infinite in all perfections. All created beauty and perfection dwindles away to a mere nothing when compared with him. He is infinitely good to us; and all our good is from him and in him: he is the Being of our being, the Life and the Light of our souls, our Maker, our Redeemer, our Friend, our Father, our Spouse, our God, and our all. To love him is our greatest honor, interest, and pleasure; the source of all our present and future happiness. All these mo-

tives strongly recommend to us the love of God, and a sovereign hatred for our sins.

Conclude heartily to seek the pardon of your sins by true repentance enlivened with love. Remember, that "many sins were forgiven Magdalen, because she loved much," (Luke vii. 47.)

JUNE 29.

On St. Peter and St. Paul.

CONSIDER, first, that the Wisdom of God came down from heaven, to build a house, to found a city, to establish a kingdom here upon earth, which should be ever victorious over all the powers of hell, and subsist till time itself should end. St. Peter, a poor, weak, illiterate fisherman, by the divine appointment was made the master-builder, under Christ, of this house and temple, and at the same time its strong rock and foundation. He was raised to be the first governor of this city, the prime minister of this kingdom of God upon earth, [Matt. xvi. 18, 19. John xxi. 15, &c.] Oh! how true it is that God hath chosen "the foolish things of the world, that he may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world, that he may confound the strong:—that no flesh should glory in his sight."

Consider, secondly, that although an ignorant fisherman like St. Peter, seems indeed little qualified to be a preacher and a teacher of Jews and Gentiles, and the prince of the apostles; yet he was humble and simple; and of such God usually makes choice for the greatest things. But St. Paul was a proud, blasphemous Pharisee, a bloody persecutor, a ravenous wolf, scattering and destroying the sheep of Christ. And yet he is made in a moment by a miracle of grace, a vessel of election to carry the name of Christ before nations and kings, and the children of Israel. Behold here is a change of the right hand of the Most High! Here the divine power, wisdom and goodness shine forth much more brightly, than even in the raising of the dead to life.

Consider, thirdly, the lives of these two great saints, after their call and election; their ardent zeal for the glory of their Lord; their unwearied labors in extending his spiritual kingdom; their constancy in a long course of sufferings, dying in a manner daily for the cause of God; and above all, that divine love and charity which burnt continually in their breasts, and grew daily in them stronger and stronger, till it made them victorious over death, and conducted them to eternal life.

Conclude to glorify Almighty God for the graces conferred upon these two princes and pillars of his church; and diligently learn the lessons which they taught.

JUNE 30.

On sincerity in confession.

CONSIDER, first, that a curse is pronounced against those who "do the work of God deceitfully," [Jerem. xlviii. 10.] And surely, they do the work of God deceitfully in the highest degree, who go to the sacrament with fraud and deceit, and while they outwardly profess humility and sincerity, conceal through pride of heart, and disguise by lies, the guilt of their conscience. Ananias and Saphira were struck dead by a visible judgment of God, for "telling a lie to the Holy Ghost," [Acts v.] And are not all those who seek to impose upon the minister of God in this most solemn and sacred function, also guilty of this grievous crime? They commit a sacrilege too, when they receive absolution in this case, and a still more unpardonable one, when by an unworthy communion they also become guilty of the body and blood of Christ.

Consider, secondly, what inconceivable difficulties and perplexities a person is exposed to, by criminally concealing any thing in confession. For when one yields to this temptation, the devil takes possession of the soul in such manner, as to make her apprehend the confession of her guilt, more than either death or hell. Hence she goes on adding sin to sin, sacrilege to sacrilege, gnawed with a remorse which she tries in vain to stifle for the present, under the delusive fancy that she shall confess them hereafter. In the mean time her difficulties increase, and the devil daily acquires more and more power over her, while the grace of God removes to a greater distance from her; till at length mercy abused gives place to justice; and she is cut off in the midst of her sins, to be confessed too late in hell.

Consider, thirdly, how little reason a penitent has to be so much ashamed of the confession of his sins. Sin, indeed, is shameful; but the confession of one's sin is not so. No: the humble confession of a sinner gives glory to God, is honorable to the penitent himself, and affords joy to the whole court of heaven. And, as to the confessor, besides that he is bound by all laws to an eternal secrecy, and can make no kind of use of the knowledge he receives by confession any way disagreeable to the penitent; far from despising him on that account, he has a more tender regard than ever for a soul, which has thus unbosomed herself to him. In the mean time, the penitent ex

periences much comfort and joy, in having now eased himself of that load which would not suffer him to be at rest.

Conclude to beware of the artifices of the devil, who hates nothing worse than an humble confession; and whenever you wish to find some reason to disguise your sin, be sure to confess the sooner that which you feel a difficulty in declaring, for fear of being imposed upon by pride or self-love.

JULY 1.

On time and eternity.

CONSIDER, first, how precious a thing time is, which we are so apt to squander away. It is all given us to be employed in the service of God; and there is not one moment of it, in which we may not labor for an eternity of bliss. Our everlasting salvation or damnation will depend upon the good or bad use of this talent, which God has put into our hands to improve by our good management. Alas! how little do we think of this!

Consider, secondly, how short is the term of this mortal life; a mere nothing compared with eternity: and how quickly does it pass away! When once gone, it cannot be recalled, nor leaves the smallest trace behind it. The present time is all we can call our own: and God alone knows how long it will be so. Our hours, one after another, post away with precipitate haste into the vast gulf of eternity, and appear no more. The very moment in which we read this line, is just passing, never to return. Employ then the present time to the best advantage: its loss can never be repaired.

Consider, thirdly, that all temporal enjoyments of honors, riches and pleasures, are of the like condition; all pass away with time. Only eternity and the goods or evils which it comprises, are truly great; without end, without change, without alloy. A few short years are more than any one can promise himself; and after that, poor sinner, what will become of thee? Alas! the worms will prey upon thy body, and merciless devils on thy unrepenting soul! Thy worldly friends will all forget thee: the very stones on which thou hast thy name engraved, will not long outlive thee. Oh! "vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but to love God, and to serve him alone!"

Conclude, so to use this present time and all temporary things, as to make them useful to your soul on her journey towards eternity.

JULY 2.

On the visitation of the blessed Virgin.

CONSIDER, first, that Mary after her conception, "rising up, went into the hill country with haste; into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachery, and saluted Elizabeth (who, according to the angel was then in the sixth month of her pregnancy.) And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, she was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy," &c. This mysterious visitation is honored by the church in the festival of this day.

Consider, secondly, that at the first voice of the mother of God in this visit, John the Baptist, yet unborn, is immediately cleansed from original sin, and sanctified in his mother's womb. The use of reason is advanced in him and he is even now made sensible of that "true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." Even now he longs to go before him; and proclaims aloud to all the world, "behold the Lamb of God! behold him who taketh away the sins of the world," (John i. 29.) On this occasion, Elizabeth also is favored with many wonderful gifts and supernatural lights, and with a distinct revelation of the incarnation of the Son of God and its happy consequences; and is filled with the Spirit of God. Learn hence, O christian! how powerful is the intercession of the holy mother of God, in procuring for us the greatest blessings.

Consider, thirdly, the sentiments of the blessed Virgin, expressed in the admirable canticle which she then pronounced. "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is Mighty hath done great things to me, and Holy is his name," &c. Do you imitate the blessed Virgin's lively sense of the divine goodness; her gratitude, her profound humility, and her holy joy in God.

Conclude with thanksgiving to our Lord for all the wonders wrought at this visitation; and for the many visits with which he favors you.

JULY 3.

On the good employment of time.

CONSIDER, first, that all the kingdoms of the earth would not be sufficient to purchase for the dying sinner one hour of time, in his greatest need. Then we shall clearly comprehend its value, and the infinite importance of spending it well. What would not the damned willingly give for one of these hours? How would they employ it if it could be granted? But alas! they would not work while they had the day before them: and now the dismal and eternal night has overtaken them, in which there is no time to work. Ah! christians, let us learn wisdom at their expense.

Consider, secondly, the strict obligation incumbent on us all, of employing our time to the best advantage. by sin we had forfeited our life, and of course, our time; and whatever time God has allowed us since our sin, has been purchased for us with the blood of Christ, in order to our repentance. It has cost him an infinite price: it therefore strictly belongs to him; and we cannot misuse it without the crime of injustice.

Consider, thirdly, that there is not one moment of our time in which we may not merit a new degree of eternal bliss; and every new degree of eternal bliss is something far more valuable, than all the kingdoms of the earth. What a loss then, to throw away so many hours, and days, and years of this precious time. A loss so great, that if the happy state of the blessed in heaven could admit of grief, they would certainly regret to all eternity, every moment which they had not employed to the best advantage.

Conclude to dedicate all your time to the doing of the will of God. Thus you will secure your own eternal interest.

JULY 4.

On remembering our last things.

CONSIDER, first, that the remembrance of death, the view of the grave, and of the speedy corruption of this body of ours; and the serious reflection that we must quickly part with our dearest friends and possessions, must needs humble us, and check our sensual and carnal inclinations. But when we look beyond the grave, and consider that a severe judge will there await us, whose all-seeing eye is ever upon our thoughts, words and actions; that these are all to be weighed in the scales of his divine justice, which cannot endure iniquity; and that

the issue will be life or death eternal: how is it possible we should dare to sin?

Consider, secondly, that the transitory things of this world; its goods and evils, as we call them, make a great impression on our souls, shut up as they are, in this earthly prison. We are fond of honor, riches and pleasures, and dread contempt, poverty and pain, as something real. But the meditating on eternity undeceives us, and shows that all is nothing, which passes with time; that nothing is truly great but what is eternal; that those things deserve not the name of *goods*, which contribute nothing to make us either good here, or happy hereafter; and that those are no *evils*, which help to bring us to an infinite *good*.

Consider, thirdly, what lessons, what instructions, what exhortations may we read among the silent monuments of the dead, who made some noise in the world heretofore, but now are thought of no longer!—by attending in spirit at the trials of the great bar; by going down alive into the darksome dungeons below, or ascending up to heaven, the mansion of eternal bliss!

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CONSIDER, first, that nothing is more certain than death. “It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment,” (Heb. ix. 27.) The hour will most certainly come when thou, my soul, who art reading these lines, must bid a long farewell to this flattering world, and to all thou hast admired in it, and even to thy own body, the individual companion of thy life!

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Conclude, since you are so soon to part, always to be such in life, as you wish to be found at death.

JULY 6.

On the time and manner of our death.

CONSIDER, first, that as your time here will be very short, so the hour and manner of your death are quite uncertain. You know not where, nor when, nor how it will take place. Will it be this night or to-morrow? a week, a month, a year hence? Alas! all the circumstances attending this awful hour are perfectly concealed from us: we know only that we are to die, and must take care to be always prepared for our departure.

Consider, secondly, that you can die but once, and on this moment of death depends eternity. If you die well, all is well for endless ages; if ill, you are lost for ever. Make it then the great business of your life, to learn to die well, especially as you know not whether you may be snatched away when you least expect it, without any help at all.

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Consider, secondly, the great but general error of men. They promise themselves fine things when they shall be upon their death-bed; and neglect their preparation in the time of health. Thus they tempt God by living unconcernedly in sin, and expect a miracle of divine grace at the hour of death, to change them in a moment into saints, notwithstanding their contempt of all his calls in life. No, no; God will not thus be mocked.

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On the sentiments of the soul at the hour of death.

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Consider, thirdly, how bitterly you will then regret the neglect of so many calls and invitations of your gracious God;

the loss of so many favorable opportunities; the abuse of the sacraments; the misemploying of so much time, and of the gifts of God! How will the false reasonings of the world, the delusions of his own passions, the affected ignorances of things he had no mind to know, and, all the deceitful pretenses of a false conscience, appear now in their true colors; and leave the sinner in his greatest need!

Conclude no longer to suffer yourself to be the dupe of the world, the flesh and the devil,—to the eternal loss of your soul.

JULY 9.

On the death of the just man.

CONSIDER, first, those words of the royal prophet, [Psalm cxv.] "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," and reflect at leisure, how truly happy is that christian, at the hour of death, who has served his God with fervor during life. With what willingness does he leave this world! What tranquility of soul does he feel from the testimony of a good conscience! How joyfully does he throw himself into the arms of a tender Father, who he knows will never abandon his loving children!—"O let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like theirs!" [Numb. xxiii.]

Consider, secondly, what a comfort it is to the good man to see himself now so near the end of all his labors; of all the miseries, dangerous conflicts and temptations of this wretched life! What a satisfaction to find himself now at the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, where he shall see, love, and enjoy his God for ever; and to look forward into that blissful eternity into which he is just entering!

Consider, thirdly, the particular providence of God in favor of his servants at their death. "The Lord helps them on the bed of their sorrow," says the Psalmist, [xl. 4.] "he turns all their couch for them in their sickness." He protects them at that critical hour under the shadow of his wings, against the terrors of death and judgment, which makes them cry out with the Psalmist, "though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not fear evils; for thou art with me," [Ps. xxii.]

Conclude, if you desire to die the death of the just, to live the life of the just; for such as your life is, such also will be your death.

JULY 10.

On the death of the wicked.

CONSIDER, first, that as nothing can be conceived more desirable than the death of the just; so nothing can be more frightful than that of the wicked. "The death of the wicked is very evil," saith the Spirit of God, (Ps. xxxiii. 22.) "Very evil;" indeed, when they are suddenly snatched away in their sins, and plunged in a moment into hell: it is also "very evil" when they die hard, with little or no sense of God or eternity. But supposing neither of these things happen, it is still "very evil;" for whatever way they look, all things seem to denounce to them a miserable eternity.

Consider, secondly, how dreadful to the dying sinner must be the recollection—of his past life; of his numberless and enormous offences; of the abuse of the sacraments, the profanation of holy things, the neglect of divine grace, of the word of God and of prayer, those great means of salvation, and the little good he has done in the course of his life. Alas! what anguish and distress must overwhelm his soul, when every circumstance declares to him that God has now forsaken him.

Consider, thirdly, what sad farewells must the sinner bid, at the hour of death, to all those things which he loved in life more than his God: honors, riches, pleasures, friends, and kindred, house and family. And if, to change the scene, he looks forward, he sees himself just launching forth with all his evils into eternity, which he has every reason to fear will be to him an eternity of woe!

Conclude to lead a virtuous life; and you shall have no share in this dismal end of the wicked.

JULY 11.

On the condition of the body after death.

CONSIDER, first, that the short-lived beauty of the body quickly disappears in death. St. Francis Borgia was so touched at the sight of the ghastly countenance of the deceased empress Isabel, whom a little while before he had seen in all her majesty and splendor, that he conceived upon the spot an eternal disgust for this world, and a happy resolution of serving Him alone who never dies. How happy should we be, did we copy his example.

Consider, secondly, that the soul is no sooner departed from the body, but this wretched carcase which she leaves behind,

immediately turns pale, loathsome and frightful; so that surviving friends can scarce endure to watch one night in the same room with it; and would not, on any consideration, sleep in the same bed. "O ye children of men, how long will ye be in love with vanity?" Ah, filth and corruption, why wilt thou be proud?

Consider, thirdly, O man, that whatever thou art to-day, to-morrow thou shalt be the food of worms. For these thou art preparing a banquet, while thou pamperest thy body. "Under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering," [Isa. xiv. 11.] These are to be thy inheritance, or rather, they are to inherit thee.

Conclude to make small account of the beauty of the body and study only by christian virtue to beautify your soul.

JULY 12.

On the soul's first entrance into another world.

CONSIDER, first, how the soul in death shuts her eyes to this world, and to all persons and things for which she has had any affection here, and opens them to a new and surprising scene, quite strange to her, in a region of spirits, an unknown land of which before she had scarcely any idea. Without any of her dearest friends to assist her, she finds herself surrounded with infernal furies, ready to lay violent hands upon her, and impatient for their prey.

Consider, secondly, that although the wicked spirits assault at that time both the good and the bad, the servants of God, under the protection of their guardian angels, go forward with joy and security, encompassed on all sides also with their good works. Whereas the wicked have nothing else to carry with them to the dreadful bar, but the consciousness of their past crimes, now more terrible to them than the infernal fiends themselves.

Consider, thirdly, the wretched situation of worldlings, who seldom or never seriously thought of this hour in their prosperity, and lived as if they never were to die. Alas! what will all their honors, riches, and pleasures avail them now? Where is now their state and retinue? Where that multitude of visiters and flatterers? See how they have left them all alone in the evil day, when the dismal sentence of eternal death is like to fall upon them! Sweet Jesus preserve me from this dreadful scene.

Conclude to avoid this deluge of evils which will terrify the sinner at his departure hence, by a life of piety and strict virtue.

JULY 13.

On the particular judgment after death.

CONSIDER, first, that after your departure hence, you will be cited to appear at the bar of divine justice, to give an account of your whole life, and to be tried for life or death everlasting, according to your works. Have you ever seriously thought of this great trial, which is to decide your lot for eternity? How stand your accounts, if this night you were called to the bar? It may be your case: for "the Son of man will come like a thief in the night" when least expected. Take care then to be always ready.

Consider, secondly, that God himself will be your judge, from whom nothing can be hidden, and whose judgment no one can evade:—a God of infinite purity, "in whose sight the very heavens are not clean":—a God of infinite sanctity, who hateth iniquity with an infinite hatred; and whose justice cannot cease to punish sin. The law by which we shall be tried, will be the commandments of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ: our accusers will be the devils, and the accomplices of our crimes, especially those whom we have drawn into sin; whose blood will cry to heaven for vengeance: the witnesses will be our own guilty consciences, and the sentence, for life or death eternal. Ah! let our whole life be a preparation for this great trial.

Consider, thirdly, that you will be then examined how you have discharged every branch of your duty, both in general and in particular; to God, to your neighbor, and to yourself. How you have employed your time: in what manner you have corresponded with the divine grace: what profit you have reaped from the sacraments, from the word of God, from the favorable circumstances in which God has placed you. The whole history of your life, even to an idle word and dishonest thought, will be discovered to the eyes of the whole universe: your good works too, shall be nicely sifted. O! *enter* not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord.

Conclude to judge yourself now, and embrace a life of penance, that you may obtain a favorable issue at this dreadful trial.

JULY 14.*On the different states of departed souls before the last day.*

CONSIDER, first, that according to the different issue of this trial at the particular judgment, the condition of departed souls

will be very different. For such as like the rich glutton, (Luke xvi.) shall be found at their departure quite void of grace and charity; in a word, all such as have died in mortal sin, shall like him be immediately buried in the flames of hell, "where the worm never dies, and the fire is never extinguished."

Consider, secondly, how strangely will the men of riches; the great ones of this world,—the ladies that have been slaves to their pleasures, here find their condition altered! A bed of fire, instead of their soft couches; the want of every thing that can afford them the least comfort, even to a drop of water, instead of their former affluence; eternal torments for momentary satisfactions, will succeed! In a word, they who could never brook the least thing contrary to their own humor, appetite or will, shall henceforth never know what it is to be indulged in any desire or inclination.

Consider, thirdly, the very different condition of the souls of the children of God, after their departure hence. As many of them as, like the martyrs and other saints, shall be found, when they are presented before the Judge, without blemish of sin, or debt of punishment, due to divine justice on account of former offences not sufficiently expiated, shall be immediately translated to heavenly joys. "They are absent from the body, but present with the Lord," (2 Corinthians v. 8.)

Conclude to persevere with fervor in all good works, that you may deserve to be ranked with the saints at your departure.

JULY 15.

On the souls detained in purgatory after death.

CONSIDER, first, that as all are to be tried after death, and to be rewarded according to their works which attend them hence to the judgment seat of Christ; so, those whose dead works have not been fully expiated by penance; whose devotions and other good works have been full of imperfections: who have built with wood, hay, and stubble, though not to the destroying of the foundation of the faith and grace of Christ, shall suffer loss in this fiery trial, till the dross which they carried with them out of this world be purged away.

Consider, secondly, that there are, comparatively, few at their departure so perfectly pure, as to be admitted immediately to the presence, and to the enjoyment of God. How very few are there, who have no spot, no blemish, even of *an idle word*, when they enter the other world—where, by the fixed

decrees of heaven, every soul shall be judged according to what she carries hence.

Consider, thirdly, that if we desire with the saints to be immediately introduced, after our bodily dissolution, into the mansions of bliss, we must dedicate ourselves to God, during this short pilgrimage, with the utmost fervor. How happy shall we be thus to "shut the eyes with which we see this world and mortals, in order to open them in an instant to the sight of God, and of Christ!" (St. Cyprian.)

Conclude to wash away, by penitential tears, all stains and debts of sin; and you may then piously hope to escape the fire of purgatory.

JULY 16.

On the sufferings of souls in the middle state.

CONSIDER, first, that one part of the sufferings of souls in purgatory, is their being kept in a state of violence, at a distance from Him in whom alone they can repose. All those created goods which heretofore claimed any share in their affections, are now vanished away; and their whole hearts are carried towards him with such vehement desire, as by mortals cannot be conceived. The sense they have of their sins, which disqualify them for the immediate enjoyment of God, is so lively, that heaven itself would be no heaven to them, were they to follow them thither.

Consider, secondly, that there are other great torments inflicted on such as have been great debtors, and negligent penitents; but all with a just proportion to their sins. "They shall be saved," saith the apostle, "yet so as by FIRE," (1 Cor. iii. 15.)—a FIRE which will burn without consuming, in some for many years,—in some, perhaps even to the day of judgment. But "because it is said, they shall be saved,—this fire," says St. Augustine, "is lighted," (in Psalms xxxvii.) "But surely, though they shall be saved by it, yet is this fire more grievous than whatsoever a man can suffer in this life."

Consider, thirdly, that the condition of these suffering spirits still admits of great comfort. They have departed this life in the state of grace, true penitents, though imperfect. They have a good conscience: they know they love God and are loved by him; that their sufferings will soon have an end, (for all time is short,) and will terminate in the never-ending joys of a happy eternity. In the meanwhile they feel a certain satisfaction even in their sufferings—because, such is the will of God. Happy those christians, who in all their afflictions

imitate their perfect resignation. This will go a great way towards freeing them from purgatory.

Conclude, as nothing defiled can be united to the infinite purity of God, to purify yourself thoroughly in this life, by works of penance. This will be a far milder purgatory, than the fire of the world to come.

JULY 17.

On the great accounting day.

CONSIDER, first, that after many dreadful signs and presages, which shall cause men to pine away with fear and anguish, this world with all its painted toys, shall be consumed. A fire, raging like a torrent, shall reduce all to ashes. What then, O worldlings, will become of your riches, and of all you seem to possess in this dream of your mortal life? Alas! all these things are soon to end in smoke, and when you awake you shall "find nothing in your hands" (Ps. lxxv.) but the evil you have done in your prosperity.

Consider, secondly, how, at the voice of the archangel with the last trumpet, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment," all the children of Adam, from the first to the last, by the almighty power of God, shall be raised in an instant from death to life, and every soul shall be re-united to its own body, never more to part. The bodies of the just shall be more brilliant than the sun; those of the wicked, most hideous and loathsome.

Consider, thirdly, that all this vast assembly shall then go forth to meet the JUDGE; and "every eye shall see him" coming down from heaven with great power and majesty, environed with many legions of angels. Before him shall be borne the royal standard of his cross, shining brighter than the sun, to the great comfort of the good, and the unspeakable anguish of the wicked, who, alas! have forfeited the benefit of their redemption.

Conclude always to have before your eyes the terrors of the last day; and you will not fear when it shall come.

JULY 18.

On the separation of the good and the bad.

CONSIDER, first, that at the command of the Judge, the good shall be placed at his right hand, and all the bad, (with the

evil spirits who seduced them,) at his left. Oh, everlasting separation! Henceforward these two companies shall never, never meet! In which of them, O christian, do you expect to be placed? You have it now in your power to decide. Harken then to the summons of the great trumpet of the gospel, calling you from the death of sin to the life of grace; and keep your body and soul clean from the defilements of the world, and its wicked company and conversation.

Consider, secondly, how mean a figure the great, the rich, the worldly wise, the celebrated beauties of this earth, shall make in that confused multitude at the left hand of the Judge. How will they then wish they had been always little and contemptible in this life, and poor, and meek, and humble, when they shall see those whom formerly they so much despised, now crowned with glory, strength, and beauty, and advanced to a kingdom of eternal bliss!

Consider, thirdly, what will be their confusion when the books of conscience shall be laid open, and all the guilt of their whole lives exposed to the public view of men and angels: those works of darkness, which perhaps they could not bear to discover even to the minister of God, though tied by all laws, divine and human, to perpetual secrecy. Alas! they will then vainly call upon the mountains to fall upon them and cover their shame, and to hide them from the wrath of God.

Conclude to take such measures in this *your day*, as may effectually secure you against the terrible *day of the Lord*.

JULY 19.

On the thoughts of the wicked upon this dreadful separation.

CONSIDER, first, the sentiments of the wicked on this occasion, expressed by the spirit of God in the book of Wisdom, (chap. v.) "These seeing it," (the glorious exaltation of the just) "shall be troubled with horrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation; saying within themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, These are they whom we had heretofore in derision, and for a parable of reproach: we fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor: behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.

Consider, secondly, how bitter these poor wretches will now condemn their past folly! "Therefore," continue they, "we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath

not risen upon us; we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and we have walked through hard ways; but the way of the Lord we have not known."

Consider, thirdly, what remorse and fruitless repentance for their pride, and other excesses during life, will then torment their souls! "What," say they, "hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on; and as a ship that passeth through the waves, whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found: so we being born, forthwith have ceased to be, and have been able to show no mark of virtue; but are consumed in our wickedness." Ah, christians! mark well these speeches of the reprobate, and take effectual measures while you yet have time to avoid their misfortune.

Conclude to separate yourself from the society of the wicked here, that you may not be involved with them in eternal misery hereafter.

JULY 20.

On the opening of the books of conscience.

CONSIDER, first, what is said in the word of God of the opening of the books, when the LORD will sit in judgment, (Dan. vii.) "I beheld till thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat down. Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him: the judgment sat, and the books were open." (And Revel. xx. 11, 12.) "I saw a great white throne," saith St. John, "and one sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life—and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Consider, secondly, what are these books which will be opened at the day of judgment. In the first place, the books of our consciences, with all the divine records, in which all our thoughts, words, and actions, are punctually registered. In the second place, the books of the gospel—of the rules of life prescribed by Jesus Christ—and of the commandments of God. And lastly, the book of life, even that book in the first line of which it is written of Jesus Christ, (Ps. xxxix.) that he should come to do his Father's will: and in which the names of all stand recorded, under that of Jesus Christ, who

with him, and through him, have done the will of his Father, and embraced the law of his love in the very midst of their hearts.

Consider, thirdly, that the study of these awful books will be of infinitely greater importance to you, than the knowledge of all human sciences and the polite arts, the productions of which must all perish in the last fire. By the contents of these books you are to be judged. Judge yourself *now* impartially by them, and you shall escape the terrors of the judgment to come.

Conclude, from time to time, to take a strict survey of your whole interior, in the presence of your Judge: this will keep you always ready at his call.

JULY 21.

On the manifestation of conscience at the last day.

CONSIDER, first, that upon the opening of the books of conscience, the sins of the reprobate shall all appear in their most odious colors,—not in their own eyes only,—but shall be exposed to the public view of that immense assembly of all heaven and earth, visible and evident to the eyes of all, both angels and men, good and bad. Ah, poor sinner! how will you then endure your extreme confusion?

Consider, secondly, what anguish will oppress you, when all your works of darkness, and the abominations which you had committed in the greatest privacy, and which you would not have had known to your dearest friends and acquaintance for all the world, and perhaps could not find in your heart to disclose even to your director, under the strictest secrecy, shall now be displayed before your face, with every aggravating circumstance, in the great consistory of the whole universe.

Consider, thirdly, and reflect at leisure, how all your thoughts, words, and actions, the moment they go from you are enrolled in the divine books. Ah! in what condition will your's there appear? Will your life stand the trial of the book of the gospel? Has your name any place in the book of life, where none are entered but such as do the will of God?

Conclude with a hearty repentance and a sincere confession of all your guilt to the minister of God; and he, by virtue of the commission of Jesus Christ, (John xx.) will absolve you from all your sins, which alone can condemn you at this last trial.

JULY 22.

On St. Mary Magdalene, (Luke vii.)

CONSIDER, first, the sudden and wonderful conversion of this glorious penitent. "Behold a woman in the city, who was a sinner," (says St. Luke.) "when she knew that Jesus was at meat in the house of the Pharisee, brought an alabaster box of ointment: and standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet with her tears; and she wiped them with the hairs of her head, and she kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment," (Luke vii. 37, 38.) See here a penitent indeed! thoroughly penetrated with the sense of the dreadful evil of her sins, and therefore not to be restrained either by shame or fear, or anything the world might say or think, from having immediate recourse to her SAVIOUR,—though then at table, and in the midst of Pharisees!

Consider, secondly, Magdalene's great humility; her faith, her love, her tears of repentance on this occasion. Her ardent love, in particular, shows itself by her often kissing our Saviour's feet, and by the penitential tears which it produces; and is therefore taken notice of by him, as the main disposition towards her justification: "Many sins are forgiven her, for she hath loved much," (verse 47.)

Consider, thirdly, in this instance, the wonderful mercies of God, who thus changes, in an instant, the greatest sinners into the greatest saints; and learn never to despair of the conversion of any one, nor prefer yourself before any others; since whatever they are to-day, to-morrow they may be great penitents, and favorites of heaven. Secondly, we must learn from this example, a ready and courageous compliance with the graces and calls of God. Thirdly, that the way to obtain the pardon of our sins, and to all holiness, is an ardent love of our blessed Redeemer.

Conclude, if you have followed Magdalene in her sins, to imitate her also in her repentance.

JULY 23.

On the last sentence of the good.

CONSIDER, first, that the awful examination of the last judgment being closed, our Lord turning to the right, will address this sweet and amiable invitation to his elect: "Come, ye blessed of my Father! possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," (Matthew xxv. 34.) Thrice-happy souls! that shall be found worthy to hear this

joyful sentence pronounced in their favor. But, oh what envy, what rage and despair, shall rack the souls of the reprobate, when they shall reflect how easily they also, might have secured to themselves a share in this happy lot of their friends; and they would not.

Consider, secondly, the import of this sentence. Come, says the Judge,—from your long and tedious banishment, to your true and heavenly country. Your crosses, labors, and conflicts are now no more; instead of these, you shall henceforth enjoy whatever can complete your happiness. Arise, my beloved; the winter is now past, the floods and storms are all over; “Arise, and come. Enter into the joy of your Lord; the kingdom is prepared for you” from the beginning, and shall endure for endless ages.

Consider, thirdly, that this heavenly sentence draws us to our God, receives us into the bosom of his goodness, transforms us into himself. Nothing less could ever fully satisfy our souls. O glorious *blessing* indeed, to be thus “blessed of the Father!” O happy *kingdom*, in which we shall eternally live and reign with the true and living God!

Conclude, to secure to yourself this happy sentence, by your diligence and faithful perseverance in all good works.

JULY 24.

On the last sentence of the wicked.

CONSIDER, first, how the great Judge, turning himself, after this, towards the wicked on his left, with fire in his eyes and terror in his countenance, shall thunder out the dreadful sentence of eternal death, in these words: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” O dismal curse, and most woeful banishment, from the city of God into the horrid region of the *second death*; where these wretches must burn for ever with the devil and his angels in eternal flames!

Consider, secondly, what this dreadful curse includes. I would have given you my *blessing*, will our Lord then say, but you would not receive it: a *curse* you have chosen, and a *curse* shall be your everlasting lot. It shall stick close to you like a garment which you shall never quit: it shall enter your very bowels, and search into the very marrow of your bones. Your eyes shall never see a glimpse of comfortable light; your ears shall be forever entertained with frightful shrieks and groans; your taste embittered with the gall of dragons, and all your members shall be tormented in the fire of hell.

Consider, thirdly, that this terrible curse shall also reach the

soul: as if the judge should say,—a curse upon your understanding never to be enlightened with a ray of truth;—a curse upon your will, never to obtain any thing it loves or desires, but to be always bound down to what it hates and abhors;—a curse upon your memory, to be ever revolving, in the bitterness of a fruitless repentance, the folly and madness by which you have forfeited a happy eternity, for vain and fleeting pleasures. Your conscience shall be ever gnawed by the worm that never dies; and your whole soul shall be torn in pieces with furious hatred and despair. Good God, let me never be so wretched as to incur this dismal curse; nor shut upon me those dreadful gates which shall never more be opened to the damned!

Conclude to turn now to God with your whole heart; and renounce forever all sinful pleasures and ungodliness: thus shall you receive a blessing at that day, instead of a curse.

JULY 25.

On St. James.

CONSIDER, first, that St. James, the son of Zebedee, elder brother of St. John the apostle, was one of those disciples for whom our Lord showed a more particular regard. His and his brother's zeal and fervor in the cause of Christ, obtained for them from our Lord himself, the surname of *Boanerges*, or Sons of Thunder. This glorious title they made good in their preaching, and in their labors; and St. James, with the advantage of being the first of all the apostles, who laid down his life for the love of his Master, and sealed his doctrine with his blood.

Consider, secondly, what kind of sufferings St. James and his fellow apostles endured daily for the love of Christ; and with what patience and charity. "I think," says St. Paul, (1 Cor. iv.) "that God has set forth us apostles the last; as it were men appointed to death: because we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake—we are weak—we are without honor. Even unto this hour, we both hunger and thirst, and have no fixed abode: and we labor, working with our own hands: we are reviled, and we bless: we are persecuted, and we suffer it: we are made as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all, even until now." See, christians, in what manner the greatest favorites of heaven were treated by the children of the world. But no wonder; for their divine Master himself was used no better: and all who desire to reign with him, must be content to suffer with him.

Consider, secondly, that SS. James and John, though they had been now trained up three years in the school of Christ, yet before his passion and the descent of the Holy Ghost, were not divested of ambition; and they induced their mother to ask for them that they might sit, the one on the right hand of Christ, the other on the left, in his kingdom. But hearken to the words of our Lord on this occasion. "You know not," says he, "what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I shall drink?" &c. O how true it is, "we know not what we ask" when we ask for honors, riches, pleasures, and the like, which instead of bringing us nearer to our God, are apt to carry us away from him! Whereas patient suffering is the sure way to his eternal kingdom.

Conclude to keep close to your humble and suffering Lord; and you shall be exalted with him in glory.

JULY 26.

On St. Ann.

CONSIDER, first, that St. Ann and Joachim, her consort, were chosen by heaven to be the parents of the blessed Virgin. And what a saintlike education did they not give to this pure creature? All the true children of Christ have ever loved his mother, and considered her as their own: how then can we do otherwise than love these two great saints, from whom the world received so valuable a present!

Consider, secondly, the properties of a wise and virtuous woman, (Proverbs xxxi.) particularly her constant attention "to do good and not evil all the days of her life;" her unwearied industry in acquiring the spiritual riches of virtue, and storing up a treasure for eternity; her diligence in the exercise of the works of mercy and charity. "Strength and beauty are her clothing," saith the wise man, speaking of her interior; "and she shall laugh in the last day," when others shall be sad and sorrowful. Of this description was St. Ann.

Consider, thirdly, that according to the gospel, (Matt. xiii. 44.) the kingdom of God in our souls is a treasure of infinite value, which enriches us by the possession of God himself, here by grace, and hereafter in glory. This treasure is hidden from the children of the world: but the children of God whose eyes are open to the truth, discover this inestimable treasure, and spare no cost to obtain it: they even sell all they have to purchase it; that is, they give up their humors, their passions, their worldly affections, their sensual inclinations. Thus they become masters of this heavenly treasure.

Conclude to seek first this kingdom of God in your soul; and all other things shall be added unto you, with interest.

JULY 27.

On Hell.

CONSIDER, first, what is said of hell in the Old Testament. It is called, (Job. x.) "A land" (from which there is no coming back) "dark and covered with the obscurity of death: a land of misery—where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth." In Isaiah (xxx. 33.) it is called Topheth, otherwise Gehenna, where the idolators burnt their children in sacrifice to the devil. "Topheth," says he, "is prepared from yesterday: prepared by the king, deep and wide. The nourishment thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindleth it." The wise man adds, (Eccles. xxxix.) "There are spirits—created for vengeance; and in their fury they lay on grievous torments, to appease the wrath of him that made them. Fire, hail, famine and death—the teeth of beasts—and scorpions, and serpents."

Consider, secondly, the description of hell, drawn by our Lord himself in his gospel. He calls it the "gehenna of fire," [Matt. v.] "A fire that cannot be quenched; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished;" and where "every one shall be salted with fire," [Mark ix.] "An eternal fire," and "everlasting punishment," [Matt. xxv.] "A place of torments in flames," where the wicked shall not be allowed even so much as one "drop of water to cool their tongue," [Luke xvi.] "A furnace of fire," where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," &c.

Consider, thirdly, what a dreadful scene of misery is set before our eyes, in these and many other texts of holy scripture: how many bitter ingredients compose this cup of the divine wrath, of which the wicked must drink in hell for evermore? Take a view of them, O my soul, at leisure; that the sight may imprint in thee a wholesome fear of sin, the only evil that can condemn thee to that place of torments. Ah! christians; it is impossible we should seriously believe and think of hell, and yet presume to sin.

Conclude to take the most effectual means, since you can endure so little here, to prevent your ever falling into this place of torments!

JULY 28.

Other considerations on Hell.

CONSIDER, first, that the Almighty is infinite in all his attributes; as in his power, wisdom and goodness; so in his avenging justice too. Consequently, by the greatness of his love, mercy, and patience here, we may measure the greatness of his future wrath and vengeance against impenitent sinners. He has never ceased during life to heap his favors upon them, and to offer them his mercy: and now they must for ever feel the dreadful vengeance of his justice, which they have so wantonly abused and contemned.

Consider, secondly, that beatitude is defined—"a perfect and never ending state of happiness, comprising at once all that is good, without any mixture of evil." If, then, damnation be the opposite to beatitude,—it must needs be an everlasting deluge of all that is evil, without the smallest mixture of good.

Consider, thirdly, that the misery of the damned is unchangeable—because they carry with them, out of this world, the enormous guilt of mortal sin; a dreadful stain which even the flames of hell can never efface! For as there is no room for repentance in hell, there can be no remission of sin. Hence it calls eternally for the avenging justice of God, which cannot but inflict eternal punishment upon eternal guilt.

Conclude to detest, above all evils, the dreadful evil of mortal sin; and you will not need to fear everlasting damnation.

JULY 29.*On the prison of Hell.*

CONSIDER, first, that hell is a dreadful prison, in which the damned are confined for all eternity: a prison whose gates are eternally barred upon them, and shut in with them whatever can make them completely miserable. O dismal locks and bolts, which exclude for ever all good, and admit of nothing but God's avenging justice!

Consider, secondly, that this prison of the damned is full of horror and darkness. Here no sun, no moon, no stars are ever seen: a dismal night eternally prevails,—a night that never expects the return of day. The very fire which rages here is black and darksome; it affords no light to the wretched prisoners, but such as will increase their misery.

Consider, thirdly, that in this frightful dungeon the damned are bound, "hand and foot," in eternal chains, [Matth. xxii.] That head, which by their pride they had lifted up against

God, is now nailed down at an immense distance from him: that stiff neck, which they refused to bend to his sweet yoke, is loaded with the enormous weight of infernal irons; and all their members are enwrapped in links of grinding flames.

Conclude, to provide [in time] for your last end, lest you be cast into this dismal and everlasting prison.

JULY 30.

On the entertainments of hell.

CONSIDER, first, that worldings who have here indulged themselves in excess, shall be tormented in hell with ravenous hunger and thirst. Their wine there is the gall of dragons, and the venom of asps, which is incurable, [Deut. xxxii. 33.] Their cups are full of liquid fire and stinking sulphur, which is "the wine of the wrath of God." Their gardens of pleasure are now changed into a "pool of fire and brimstone:" their criminal embraces, into the cruel gnawings of infernal serpents, ever preying upon their bosoms.

Consider, secondly, those eternal shrieks and groans; those horrid curses and blasphemies; the insulting voices of the tormentors, which will make a part of the melancholy entertainment. Surely if there were nothing else in hell but the being condemned to an everlasting night, in the midst of so much horror and confusion, the worst of temporal evils would be far more eligible.

Consider, thirdly, the abominable company which will complete the misery of the scene, for endless ages: so many hideous spirits; so many merciless devils; and, what will be still more odious to the damned, the unhappy partners of their sins. What bitter hatred, what hellish rage and fury shall now succeed their former lawless love! How will they now tear and torment one another, being eternally chained together in those black fiery links, which by their dark passions and lusts they have in their life-time made for themselves.

Conclude, henceforward, to flee the sinful entertainments of the children of this world, and a voluptuous life; and you shall have no part in the dismal entertainments of hell.

JULY 31.

On the fire of Hell.

CONSIDER, first, that in hell every vice will meet with its peculiar torment. The proud, the covetous, the lascivious; each shall receive their proper reward. But the general punishment of all the damned is—that they shall burn in “everlasting fire.” And who can endure the thoughts of this eternal burning, in that dreadful “pool of fire and brimstone?”

Consider, secondly, that the fire of this world can only reach the body, which it quickly consumes, and then dies away; but the fire of hell not only pierces the body through and through with exquisite pain, it moreover penetrates the soul in her inmost recesses, with its searching flames. Ah! who could endure such a fire as this, even for one moment? How much less for a long eternity?

Consider, thirdly, that no man upon earth who has not quite lost his senses, would be willing, even for the empire of the world, to be broiled on a gridiron, or roasted for half an hour by a slow fire, though he were sure to escape with life. Nay, where is the man who would venture to hold his finger in the flame of a candle for half a quarter of an hour, for any reward this earth can bestow? Where is then the judgment of the greatest part of christians, who pretend to believe hell fire, and yet live on with little apprehension [and that oftentimes for years together] in the guilt of mortal sin, in danger every moment of falling into this dreadful and everlasting fire?

Conclude never to expose yourself to the danger of this everlasting fire, by mortal sin, even for one moment; that moment may be your last.

AUGUST 1.

On the pain of loss in hell.

CONSIDER, first, the cruel interior pangs and agonies of the soul caused by the eternal loss of God, and of all that is good. Alas! she has lost her God forever: no glimpse of hope, no sense of good, no power of love either for God or their neighbor is left in the damned. Ah! unhappy wretches, who cannot love! They are sent into an eternal banishment from the face of the Lord, far from his glorious kingdom and the happy society of his children; far from their true country, and all its blissful joys, once purchased for them by the blood of the Son of God.

Consider, secondly, that the damned by their own woful ex-

perience will be fully convinced, now it is too late, that the loss of God is most direful. In losing him they have lost an infinite good, their first beginning and last end; by whom and for whom they were created; from whom whatever good they have at any time received was all derived. But now they have lost this overflowing fountain, or rather this boundless ocean of all good, without recovery, for all eternity.

Consider, thirdly, that the lively sense of this most rueful of all losses, and of all its dismal consequences, will continually rack their despairing souls: they will not be able so much as to turn away their thoughts from it one moment. Whichever way they look for one drop of ease or comfort in him or from him, they will meet with none. Hence flow back despair, rage, hatred, and most horrid blasphemy.

Conclude never to turn away from God in this life, by wilful sin; and you shall never experience this dismal loss.

AUGUST 2.

On the worm of hell.

CONSIDER, first, that *the worm* of the damned *shall never die*, (Mark ix.) and that this never-dying worm of a wicked conscience, like a black poisonous serpent, will forever fasten upon their breasts, and eat its way into their hearts. Ah! who can conceive this eternal remorse; this dismal melancholy; this most bitter but fruitless repentance; this extreme anguish, accompanied with everlasting horror, confusion, and despair! O sin, how hateful a monster art thou!

Consider, secondly, what a racking torture it will be to the damned to all eternity, to be constantly revolving in their memory that folly, which made them forfeit the eternal joys of heaven, and part with both their God and their souls, for a vile satisfaction which lasted but one moment, and left nothing behind it but guilt and remorse; or for some point of honor or petty interest, by which they were robbed of all *true* honor, and are now reduced to the extremity of all misery!

Consider, thirdly, what will be their judgment of this cheating world and all its fleeting vanities, when after having been millions of years in hell, looking back and scarce able to find in that immense duration the small point of their mortal life, they shall, with most bitter regret, continually compare together time and eternity, past enjoyments and present punishments, heaven and hell!

Conclude to abhor all wilful sin: this alone will feed the never-dying worm.

AUGUST 3.

On a miserable eternity.

CONSIDER, first, that hell would be no longer hell, if there were the least glimpse of hope, that the miseries of the damned would one day have an end, though it were after millions of ages; because it would admit of some comfort. But, for all its inexpressible torments to continue for ever, as long as God shall be God; Oh! this is, of all others, the greatest torture of the damned! O, eternity, eternity! how little do worldlings apprehend thee now! how terrible wilt thou be to them hereafter, when engulfed in thy bottomless abyss!

Consider, secondly, if one short night seems so long and tedious to a poor sick man in a burning fever; if he counts every hour, and with so much impatience longs for the morning, which yet will afford him but little relief; what must this dreadful night of eternity be, in the midst of all the pains of hell!

Consider, thirdly, what an immense space of time would be required, for any one of the damned, if he were to shed but one tear in a thousand years, to shed tears enough to fill the sea. The first of all the damned would not yet have shed six tears. And yet, O dreadful eternity! the time will certainly come, when any of those wretches shall be able with truth to say, that at the rate of one tear for a thousand years, he might have shed tears enough not only to make a sea, but to drown the whole world, and to fill up the vast space between heaven and earth! And yet, alas! after these millions of millions of ages, he will be as far from the end of his misery, as he was the first day he came into that place of torments.

Conclude to decline with all your power, in future, all such sins as lead to this miserable eternity; and do away the past by sincere confession and penitential tears.

AUGUST 4.*On the happiness of heaven.*

CONSIDER, first, that the mercy and goodness of God manifest themselves in a wonderful manner, above all his works, (Ps. cxliv.) If then his justice be so terrible with regard to his enemies, how much more will his mercy, his goodness and his bounty appear, in favor of his friends? O what must this blessed kingdom of heaven be, which in his infinite goodness he has prepared for his beloved children? Which he has contrived by his infinite wisdom, and effected by his infinite pow-

er, for the manifestation of his glory, and in order to entertain them all with an eternal banquet worthy of himself?

Consider, secondly, what an immense price has been laid down to purchase the happiness of heaven; even the most precious blood of the Son of God : and, notwithstanding we must, over and above, give up all things else; and even our whole selves in exchange for it, yet we are said to receive it "free-cost," (Apoc. xxii. 17.) So very small is the proportion. Truly "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God hath prepared for them that love him," (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

Consider, thirdly, that though we should suffer a thousand deaths for the sake of this eternal life, we are still assured, (Rom. viii. 18.) "that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with this heavenly glory, that is to come." Turn then all your attention towards this true and eternal felicity : all things else are but mere trifles, in comparison with your sovereign and universal good.

Conclude with hearty thanks to the goodness of God, who made you for this noble end; and resolve to use diligently all the means of salvation.

AUGUST 5.

On the good things of our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, that true honors, true riches and true pleasures, are not to be found in the broad way of the world, nor in the ways of sin; but only "in the land of the living," together with all other good things. Here alone is the highest nobility and the most exalted dignity. Here all are of blood royal, children and heirs of the King of kings; all for ever crowned with wreaths of immortal glory.

Consider, secondly, what riches flow in this happy "Land of Promise." Nothing is wanted, nothing coveted, all things in abundance. It is called in scripture a *kingdom*; and such a kingdom indeed it is to all those happy souls, as in wealth, power, greatness and endless duration, infinitely exceeds all the kingdoms of the world. O my soul, aspire with all thy might after this heavenly kingdom.

Consider, thirdly, that this heavenly land flows also with the milk and honey of pure and immortal delights. Its blessed inhabitants, according to the Psalmist, are all eternally "in-ebriated with the plenty of God's house, and are made to drink of the torrent of his pleasure : for with him is the fountain of life—clear as crystal, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb,"

Conclude no longer to be a slave to vain honors, false riches, and fading pleasures; bend your course towards your true country, where your utmost desires shall be accomplished for eternity.

AUGUST 6.

On the transfiguration of our Lord, Matt. xvii.

CONSIDER, first, how our Lord, "taking with him Peter, James and John, brought them up into a high mountain apart; and was transfigured before them: so that his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow. And there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him." Then Peter cried out: "Lord, it is good for us to be here—and as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and lo a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," (Matthew xvii.)

Consider, secondly, how wonderfully our faith and hope are strengthened in this mystery, as well by the joint testimonies of the law and the prophets bearing witness, in the persons of Moses and Elias, to the truth of the gospel and of the promises of Christ; as also by the testimony of God himself, in all the three divine persons;—by the voice of the Father; by the glory of the Son, and by the apparition of the Holy Ghost in the bright cloud.

Consider, thirdly, that it was inordinate in St. Peter to desire here for a continuance, that which was reserved for hereafter, and for those only who should be entitled to it by labors and sufferings. Hence St. Luke observed, that he knew not "what he said," (ix. 33.) With regard to divine consolations, we must admire in them the goodness and bounty of God; but we must not be discouraged when they are taken away; for merit and perfection consists not in them, but in working, suffering and loving; and for the time of this mortal life, it is ordinarily far better for us to be with our Lord upon Mount Calvary, than upon Mount Thabor.

Conclude to desire with your whole heart, one day fully to quench your thirst with the waters of the overflowing river of the city of God.

AUGUST 7.

On the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem.

CONSIDER, first, that the beauty and glory of the city of God correspond with the riches and magnificence of the Almighty Monarch, who has built it for the manifestation of his power, wisdom and goodness; and to be the eternal habitation of his dearest friends and children. If even in this place of banishment he has given us so noble a palace, beautiful with the sun, moon and stars, what must our eternal mansion be in this our true country, "the land of the living;" where alone, according to the prophet, "our Lord is magnificent," (Isai. xxxiii.)

Consider, secondly, that the walls of this city, are said in scripture to be built with precious stones, and that its streets are paved with the purest gold; that there shall be no night nor any want of the sun or moon; but that God himself will be its everlasting light; and that every one of the just shall shine like the sun. O how "glorious are the things which are said of thee, O city of God!" (Ps. lxxxvi.) But far more glorious things are veiled under these noble figures.

Consider, thirdly, that Jerusalem is interpreted "the vision of peace;" because there alone is the true seat of eternal peace. To this city no heats, no colds, no rains, no storms, no diseases, no adversities of any kind can find access, nor ever can approach this blessed abode. But a most bright day, a most serene calm, an everlasting peace eternally reigns. God "shall now wipe away all tears; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away;" (Apocal. xxi.)

Conclude to despise all earthly things, in comparison with this heavenly city; and to aspire after it alone.

AUGUST 8.

On the happy society of the blessed in heaven.

CONSIDER, first, the multitude, beauty and glory of the inhabitants of this blessed mansion. That immense number of cherubim and seraphim all on fire with divine love; that infinite multitude of saints and martyrs, and other servants of God of both sexes, gathered out of all nations; and, above them all, the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, the queen of saints and angels. The very sight of any of them, as we learn from the experience of certain saints, is enough to ravish the soul into an extacy, and to fill it with inexpressible delight: what then, will it be to see them all, and to enjoy their happy society for all eternity?

Consider, secondly, what a pleasure it is to a virtuous christian, to enjoy the company, conversation and friendship of the good and the wise. But what company; what conversation; what friendship here upon earth, however excellent, can bear any comparison with that of the blessed in heaven? There we shall meet with millions of brethren and friends, all most loving, all most wise, all most holy. The praises of God, and his eternal truths, are their continual theme; harmonious hymns of divine love are their constant entertainment.

Consider, thirdly, the love and charity which the blessed have one for another; so great, that they all have but one heart and one soul. Hence by love they esteem one another's happiness as their own. Let us imitate, as far as human frailty will permit, this blessed charity; and rejoice at every real good we discover in our neighbor, as if it were our own, let us invite all to join us here in the love and praises of our God, to be continued for all eternity in heaven.

Conclude, if you wish to be eternally happy in the society of the saints, to associate with the good here upon earth, and to flee the company of the wicked.

AUGUST 9.

On the eternal enjoyment of God.

CONSIDER, first, that although the kingdom of heaven abounds with all that can be imagined good and delightful; yet there is but one sovereign good, in the enjoyment of which consists the essential beatitude of heaven; and that is God himself. Him the blessed always "see as he is, face to face," and in the very centre of their own souls; and by the eternal contemplation of his infinite beauty and truth, together with all his divine perfections, they are quite ravished and set on fire with saraphic and eternal love.

Consider, secondly, that as Almighty God himself is infinitely happy; so we may esteem the happiness of the blessed, in some measure infinite, because they possess Him, who is the immense ocean of endless felicity, and alone the source of his own eternal happiness; and shall not that suffice, my soul, to make thee happy, which makes God himself happy! Who then can conceive the least part of the joy which that soul must experience, that sees herself thus full of God and of his eternal jubilee!

Consider, thirdly, in what manner all the powers of these blessed souls are eternally employed. Their understanding elevated by the light of glory, and "in this light of God seeing God the light," ever contemplates him with infinite compla-

gency. Their memory is continually occupied with the perfect recollection of all that he has ever done for them; his manifold preservations, by which he has so often delivered them both from a temporal and eternal death; and his numberless other benefits and distinguished favors. Their will is forever inflamed with the love of his divine attractions, his infinite beauty, goodness and liberality; and in a manner consumes herself in these delightful flames.

Conclude daily to contemplate the divine perfections now; and this shall be your eternal occupation hereafter.

AUGUST 10.

On St. LAURENCE.

CONSIDER, first, that the church has always shown a special veneration for the memory of St. Laurence. He was archdeacon to the holy pope St. Xystus, and seeing him led away to martyrdom, he exclaimed: "whither are you going, O Father without your son? Try me now, and make the experiment whether you have chosen a fit minister, to whom you have committed the dispensation of the blood of our Lord." The holy pope replied: "I am not going to leave thee, my son, nor to forsake thee; but only am going a little before thee: after three days thou shalt follow me."

Consider, secondly, the extraordinary charity of St. Laurence for his neighbor, in the diligent discharge of his office in the care and support of all the poor of the city, and in distributing among them, during the heat of the persecution, all the plate and treasures of the church, committed to his charge. His fervent love of God appeared in that invincible courage with which he endured the worst of torments, even with cheerfulness and joy; because he suffered for the sake of his Beloved. His love was truly stronger than death: and the fire with which he was broiled on the gridiron, was not to be compared with those flames of divine love, which glowed within his breast.

Consider, thirdly, from the gospel of this day, (John xii. 24 &c.) that the grain of corn must die before it can bring forth fruit. We must die to our self-love,—to our own will,—to our disorderly passions, by the practice of daily self-denial; and must all be so far, at least, martyrs of Christ, as to be dead to ourselves for the love of him. Thus shall we be acknowledged and eternally honored by his heavenly Father.

Conclude, from the example of the martyrs, to suffer at least with patience, the share allotted you in the cross of Christ.

AUGUST 11,

On the endowments of bodies glorified.

CONSIDER, first, that these bodies of ours, at the resurrection will be most wonderfully changed. "This corruptible," says the apostle, (1 Cor. xv.) "must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." And again: "it is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory: it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power: it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body."

Consider, secondly, that these earthly bodies far exceed all earthly glory and beauty. "The just," saith our Lord, "shall shine like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father," (Matth. xiii.) Yes; the very least of God's servants, in that eternal kingdom, shall be far more beautiful and resplendent, than any thing seen by mortals here below, or conceived by man's imagination. Happy those eyes, which shall behold the ravishing beauty of them all, together with the King of beauty and of glory, Jesus Christ!

Consider, thirdly, that the other bodily senses shall all be filled with unspeakable delight. And, as for the hearing in particular, it shall be forever entertained with an unexpressible harmony, formed by the melodious concerts of all the celestial choirs, and the united voices of millions of heavenly citizens. The hearing of any one of these enchanting voices, would be enough to ravish any mortal with inconceivable delight! And what must it be eternally to hear them all!

Conclude, if you would secure to your body these heavenly endowments for eternity, to keep it mortified and undefiled, during its earthly pilgrimage.

AUGUST 12.*On a happy eternity.*

CONSIDER, first, that the honors, riches, and pleasures of this world are all momentary: our life is but "a vapor which appeareth for a little while;" then presently vanishes, and is seen no more, (James iv. 15.) How long, O ye children of men, will you be in love with these empty shadows? How will you be imposed upon by mere illusion and deceit? Ah! do but give yourself up to divine love; and, instead of these vain and silly trifles which at the most you can enjoy only for an uncertain moment, you will secure to yourself infinite bliss for endless ages.

Consider, secondly, at leisure, christian soul, this immense eternity of incomprehensible felicity prepared for you in heaven, to reward the short labors and sufferings of your mortal life. The thought alone inspired St. Teresa when but an infant, with a contempt of all those things which pass away with time; and with a desire even of giving her life for the love of Christ. Often she repeated with great feeling those words, "For ever, For ever, For ever;" and in the meditation of these eternal years, a bright fire of devotion was enkindled in her soul. Let the like thought inspire you with the like affections.

Consider, thirdly, that the joys of a heaven will not become tedious, or less agreeable, by the infinite duration of their enjoyment. For, as God whom the Blessed always possess, is an immense ocean of all happiness: so the joy, pleasure, and delight of those that eternally enjoy him, is ever fresh, and ever new; and continually fills the whole capacity of their souls. O how blessed then "must they be that dwell in thy house, O Lord! For ever and ever they shall praise thee," (Ps. lxxxiii.)

Conclude henceforward to despise all that is earthly and transitory; and aspire only after this blissful eternity.

AUGUST 13.

On conformity with the will of God.

CONSIDER, first, that God demands of us our will without reserve, when he says, my "son, give me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii.) This we give him in effect, when we conform ourselves in all things with his blessed will. But if we refuse to submit to his holy will, we refuse him our heart; or at the best we offer him a divided heart which he will never accept.

Consider, secondly, the advantages of this conformity with the will of God. It gives a certain dignity and perfection to the very meanest of our actions, and to all our sufferings, by making the will of God the rule of them all. It purifies our intention in all things; it even makes us "men according to God's own heart," as the scripture says of David. It brings with it a perfect peace and tranquility of mind in all events, as being all ordered and directed by Him, who is infinitely good and infinitely wise, and orders all things for the good of those that throw their whole solicitude upon Him.

Consider, thirdly, that this happy disposition is the sovereign mean to bring all our passions into *order* and subjection, and to mortify all our irregular inclinations; for, what makes them disorderly and irregular, is their resisting the will of

God. It teaches the soul to be *meek* and *humble* under all injuries and affronts, considering them all as coming from the just appointments of heaven: in a word, it makes her, like her blessed Saviour, "obedient unto death."

Conclude earnestly to pray for this excellent virtue of conformity with the will of God: it is the greatest treasure you can enjoy in this mortal life.

AUGUST 14.

Motives of conformity with the will of God.

CONSIDER, first, that it is our greatest honor, interest, and pleasure, to conform ourselves in all things with the blessed will of God. This divine will is always right, always wise, always good. What motives then, have we to resign ourselves entirely to this sacred will? How wicked and how foolish is it to resist the will of the *Almighty*?

Consider, secondly, that all those who, with Jesus Christ, "desire in the midst of their hearts," and like him embrace and love the holy will of God, and always adhere to it, shall be acknowledged the true children of God, and the brethren of Jesus Christ: whereas they that revolt and rebel against the will of God, shall have their names blotted out of the book of life.

Consider, thirdly, that God claims our will as our Creator, because he made us to serve him, and gave us our will, with our whole soul, to be employed solely in his holy service. The Son of God claims our will as our Redeemer, by the title of purchase; because he has ransomed our souls, enslaved before to Satan; and has bought them for himself and his Father, at a great price, even with his own most precious blood. The Holy Ghost also claims our will, by the right of sanctification; because our whole soul at baptism was consecrated by the Spirit of God, to be his eternal temple.

Conclude to give to God without reserve, what upon so many titles belongs wholly to him.

AUGUST 15.

On the assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

CONSIDER, first, and contemplate in spirit, the glorious entry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, into the everlasting kingdom of her Son.

Behold her now placed above all the Cherubim and Seraphim, on a most glorious throne, the highest in heaven next to that of her divine Son,—and crowned by him with a diadem of such supereminent brightness and glory, as far exceeds our utmost conception. Rejoice, O my soul, at this glorious assumption of the Mother of thy Lord, who as he has been pleased to make us his brethren, has also given her to be our Mother.

Consider, secondly, what it was that raised our blessed Lady to this supereminent glory? It was, in the first place, her most profound *humility*: she was exalted above all, because she was the most humble of all. For he that humbleth himself the most upon earth, shall be the most exalted in heaven. 2. Her perfect *purity* of soul and body. 3. Her consummate charity; for the degree of the enjoyment of God in his eternal glory, is always in proportion to the degree of our love of God, in this mortal life. Let us then strive to imitate her humility, her purity, and her perfect charity.

Consider, thirdly, that this imitation of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, is an excellent way of honoring her, and of showing our real esteem, love, and devotion towards her. For, how can we better testify our affection and veneration for the saints of God, than by honoring and loving in them, that which made them saints, and that which God honors and loves in them—namely, their virtues? This kind of devotion is most pleasing to the saints, and most profitable to ourselves.

Conclude to form on this day a generous resolution of imitating this most Holy Virgin's life and conversation. It will add new joy to her present felicity, and engage her to become your powerful protectress.

AUGUST 16.

On the gospel for the assumption, (Luke x.)

CONSIDER, first, that our Lord going “into a certain town, a woman named Martha received him into her house: and she had a sister called Mary, who sat also at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.” How happy were these holy sisters, thus to entertain the Lord of glory, to hear his word, to converse familiarly with him! But does not this same Lord also come in person into *our* house? Does he not abide amongst us, in the blessed sacrament? May we not by devout recollection entertain him and converse with him as often as we please? It is then entirely our own fault, if we do not avail ourselves of these great advantages.

Consider, secondly, how differently the two holy sisters

were then employed; Martha being busy about "much serving," and full of care in providing for the entertainment of our Lord. In their persons are represented two different kinds of lives of the servants of God—the *active* and the *contemplative*; or two different kinds of functions of a christian, the one consisting in *action*, the other in *contemplation*;—the one in a variety of good works, done with a good intention, for the service of Christ; the other in recollection, and a more close attention to God by mental prayer. Both of them are highly commendable; but the latter is preferred by the judgment of Truth itself. "Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her."

Consider, thirdly, that this gospel is applied by the church to the Blessed Virgin, because she was the happy woman that "received Christ into her house," in a far more excellent sense; and she perfectly fulfilled in her life the functions both of Martha and of Mary; of Martha, in the services she rendered to our Lord in his humanity, for all the thirty years he was under her roof; and of Mary, because even in the midst of the duties of the active life, the eye of her heart was always upon her God:—she was attentive to the "one thing necessary, always made choice of the better part," and on this day was put in full possession of it, for eternity; according to that—"Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her."

Conclude, with her, to choose, in all things, "the better part," by diligently following her great example.

AUGUST 17.

On resignation to the will of God in our sufferings.

CONSIDER, first, that nothing happens, except sin, which does not come directly from the hand of God, and which is not the effect of his will. This is so true, that even those sufferings which seem to be brought upon us immediately by the wickedness of men, are in effect ordained by God. He detests, indeed, all malice in the will or design of the men or wicked spirits, whom he suffers to afflict us—but absolutely wills the trials and afflictions, which we suffer on these occasions. He sends them for our good; and it is our duty, as well as our greatest interest to be resigned.

Consider, secondly, that God is the best of Fathers, and that his Fatherly providence, and his tender love for us, exceed all that we can express or conceive: the holy scriptures are full of repeated declarations of this truth. Wherefore, in all our sorrows and afflictions, let us embrace this loving providence which offers us the cup, and presses us to receive it for God's

sake; assuring us it will be the means of bringing us to heaven. Oh how true it is, that the very things which we are apt to consider as evils, are indeed great and solid goods, and the occasion of our eternal welfare.

Consider, thirdly, that the first degree of resignation is—to support, at least with patience, the evils which befall us, and humbly to submit to them, as the just punishment of our sins. The second degree is—when we are moreover *ready* and *willing* to suffer, because such is the will of God; the consideration of which makes that *agreeable* to us, which naturally we dread and abhor. The third and most perfect degree is—when we even rejoice in suffering for the love of God, and take a satisfaction in crosses, in adversities, in humiliations, in contempt.

Conclude to make it your study to ascend by these steps, to the very perfection of christian virtue, where you will find your God.

AUGUST 18.

On Self-denial.

CONSIDER, first, that a disorderly self-love, by which we seek to please and gratify ourselves, is the parent of every vice. In consequence of the corruption of man by sin, we are “prone to evil from our youth.” Hence the very first condition which the Son of God requires, of all who wish to be his disciples, is “to deny themselves,” (Matt. xvi. 24.) This self-denial he constantly enforced, both in life and death. Happy they, who follow in practice this great example!

Consider, secondly, that this virtue of *self-denial* or *mortification*, by which we die to our disorderly passions, and to the world, is indeed much talked of, but little understood, and less practised. We may, notwithstanding, say of it what St. Paul says of charity, (1 Cor xiii.) that if “we speak with the tongues of men and angels—and have the gift of prophecy, and all knowledge, and all faith, so that we could remove mountains;” but are not *mortified*, “we are nothing;” and what ever good we do, as long as our passions and corrupt inclinations remain untamed, we are nothing in the eyes of God.

Consider, thirdly, that the word of God commands us even “to hate ourselves” in this life, if we hope to be either true disciples of Christ here, or eternally happy with him hereafter, (Luke xiv. 26. John xii. 25.) “If we live according to the flesh, we shall die; but if by the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live,” (Rom. viii. 13.) And “they who

are in the flesh," that is, such as are unmortified, "cannot please God," (verse 8.)

Conclude, if you desire to overcome the world and the devil, to subdue the flesh, and bring it under, by wholesome self-denials and mortification.

AUGUST 19.

On the mortification of the interior.

CONSIDER, first, that we must also observe well all the irregularities, to which our inward powers and faculties are liable, and carefully retrench them by mortification. Thus we shall purify our interior, and make it an agreeable residence for Almighty God, who delights to be with the children of men, provided they are careful to prepare him a proper lodging. This mortification of the interior is far more difficult, though more pleasing to God, and more necessary for you, than any corporal austerities whatever.

Consider, secondly, that our understanding is liable to pride, presumption and self-conceit,—a variety of empty curiosities, and many errors of dangerous consequence in practice;—errors opposite to the maxims of the gospel, and which represent things in false lights, and incline the poor soul to prefer the temporal before the eternal. Our *judgment* is rash and precipitate, clouded with many prejudices; our *memory* is ever full of empty things, and forgetful of God; and all our affections are strangely bent upon evil. All these must be corrected and mortified, to qualify the interior for a union with God.

Consider, thirdly, that as the will is or should be, the mistress of the other powers, and is obliged to keep them all in order,—so she herself must be kept orderly by mortification. Hence the wise man says, (Eccles. xviii.) "Go not after thy own lusts, but turn away from thy own will: if thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies." For this WILL of our's when indulged, is capable of hurrying us into all evil; and therefore the gospel bids us "hate our own souls"—that is, our own wills, in this world, if we hope to be happy in the next.

Conclude diligently to practice this mortification: First, by denying your own will, whatever it craves contrary to the will of God: Secondly, by often contradicting your own will, even in things indifferent: Thirdly, by restraining all over-eagerness, even in what appears to be good, and quietly following, on all occasions, the will of God alone.

AUGUST 20.

On the mortification of the passions.

CONSIDER, first, that before man was corrupted by original sin, his whole soul was regular and orderly, and all his passions were under proper command. But as soon as the superior part of the soul had withdrawn her allegiance from God, the inferior part began to rebel against the superior, and all its passions were at liberty to run into all kinds of disorders; because the bridle of original justice, with which they were hitherto restrained, was now let loose. Hence arises an absolute necessity of mortifying our passions, if we would save our souls.

Consider, secondly, that it is the duty of this mortification to regulate our love, our desires, and our joy, by keeping them always within their proper bounds, and by turning them away from all disorderly affection for perishable creatures, to the living God, in the pursuit of virtue, and of truth. In like manner, we must mortify our fear, our anger, and all our other passions, by watching and restraining all their disorders and excesses.

Consider, thirdly, that the strongest of all the passions is LOVE; and therefore the regulating of it, must be the first object of the christian's attention. Our love is regular and orderly, when we love all things according to the great rule of the will of God; when we love our friends in God, and our enemies for God. But then, on the other hand, whatever love, whether of person or thing, threatens to captivate our affections, or to divide, or take off any part of our heart from God, or goes beyond the bounds of moderation,—is disorderly, and must be corrected and mortified: it cannot stand with the love of the Lord our God "with our whole heart."

Conclude to watch over all your passions, and keep them in subjection,—but principally your love, even in lawful objects. For whatever be the object, it is criminal to love it more than God.

AUGUST 21.*On mortifying our predominant passion.*

CONSIDER, first, that among the vicious inclinations commonly classed under seven heads, but reduced by St. John to these three, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," (1 John ii.) there is usually some one or other more violent than the rest, or which occasions more or greater sins. This is termed the *predominant* or ruling passion, the

mortification of which is essentially necessary, in the spiritual life.

Consider, secondly, that this reigning passion, having already gained the heart, is too apt to impose upon the poor soul with specious pretexts. It is the Agag, which, out of a false compassion, she would willingly spare, though with the risk of being cast off by God, as Saul was, for so doing, (1 Sam. xv.) Christians, deceive not yourselves; this predominant passion is the mortal enemy of your soul. If you are sincere in the examination of your hearts, you will find it always undermining the reign of the love of God—thrusting itself upon his throne, and setting up an idol in his temple, by claiming the chief place in your affections, to the prejudice of divine love.

Consider, thirdly, that it is of infinite importance in your spiritual warfare, to know the true state of your interior, and to watch all the motions and secret ambushes of your enemies. But though you are not to allow any one of your passions or vices to remain unsubdued in your soul, yet you must turn all your forces in a particular manner against your predominant passion; and direct your daily and most fervent prayers, your confessions and communions, your particular examinations every night, and the rest of your spiritual exercises, towards the total subduing of this evil, and the acquisition of the contrary virtue.

Conclude with a resolution to follow this method: and you will at length obtain a complete victory over all your passions.

AUGUST 22.

On mortifying the sensual appetite.

CONSIDER, first, that the flesh, with its senses, was designed to be the servant of the soul, and to promote its true happiness and welfare. But if the sensual appetite be not kept under subjection by self-denial, the servant will quickly become mistress. Our sensuality, therefore, must be mortified: we must absolutely deny ourselves all *unlawful* pleasures; we must flee them more than death: and we must retrench all excess in the use even of lawful pleasures and diversions. In a word, we ought never to do any thing *merely* for pleasure.

Consider, secondly, that Christ did not study his own pleasure: "He did not please himself," (Romans xv. 3.) His whole life was a cross, which he willingly bore for the glory of his Father, and for the love of us: St. Paul "chastised his body and brought it into subjection," by voluntary mortifica-

tion (1 Cor. ix. 17.) All the saints have walked in the same footsteps: they have all crucified their own flesh, (Gal. v. 24.) The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and none but "the violent bear it away," (Matth. xi. 12.) And can christians imagine that a sensual life will bring them thither?

Consider, thirdly, that there is no one but who may and ought to practice the mortification of the flesh, and of its sensual appetites; and that too, by denying it things otherwise lawful. The guilty must do it, to punish themselves for their past sins; the innocent must do it, in order to preserve themselves from falling into sin. None must here plead excuse on account of their want of strength or health. It is easy for a christian of good will to contrive and practice a variety of self-denials,—which require neither,—by retrenching superfluities and affected niceties in eating, drinking, clothing, and the like.

Conclude, daily to put in execution these and such other mortifications; lest otherwise "flesh and blood" prevail over your soul to your eternal ruin.

AUGUST 23.

On mortifying our curiosity.

CONSIDER, first, that "the concupiscence of the eyes" must also be subdued; by which St. Augustine supposes the vice of curiosity to be meant. Alas! how many things are there, concerning which men take much pains to be informed, with great danger to their souls? How many things, which at best are useless and nothing to the purpose? And how much loss is here of their precious time? What dissipation of thought; what distractions in prayer; what forgetfulness of God and eternity!

Consider, secondly, that in order to "mortify the lust of the eyes," we must turn them "away from vanity;" and much more from all such objects as allure the soul to impure love. Unhappy they, who are ever indulging their curiosity in looking for such dangerous objects; and much more so those who by their light carriage and indecent dress, affect to draw the eyes and heart of others to lust. For the same reason we must mortify our curiosity with regard to public shows and comedies, as being full of danger, and of allurements to vice. Also with respect to the reading of all such books, as, being lewd or irreligious, tend to debauch the soul and draw her into sin. In which number, romances, play-books, and such like, are certainly to be comprised; because they inflame the passions, soft-

en the soul, and dispose her to carnal love, and extinguish the spirit of devotion and the love of God.

Consider, thirdly, that the curiosity of *hearing* also, must be mortified: first, by shutting the ears to all loose narrations, jests, or songs; all of which are apt to convey a mortal poison into the soul:—secondly, by not hearkening to scandal and detraction, with danger either of taking pleasure in it, or of countenancing and encouraging so great an evil:—thirdly, by being ever upon the watch, to prevent their taking in a still more dreadful infection, from irreligious and impious discourses which strike at the DEITY and his revealed truths, or tend to the discouragement of virtue or to the encouragement of vice.

Conclude to be ever watchful, and fervent in prayer, against the evil of a vain curiosity, which has so many ways of poisoning the soul.

AUGUST 24.

On the gospel of St. Bartholomew, (Luke vi.)

CONSIDER, first, that our Lord, being about to choose his twelve apostles, went out into a mountain to pray, and there passed the whole night in the prayer of God. Learn from this example of the Son of God, to begin all your undertakings with fervent prayer. Our blessed Redeemer stood not in need of prayer for himself, but often passed whole nights in prayer and solicitude for our instruction.

Consider, secondly, the fruits of this night's prayer in the great things performed by our Lord the next morning—First, His choice of the twelve apostles. Second, His divine sermon on the Mount. Third, the many miracles wrought by him, when “a very great multitude of people came to hear him, and be healed of their diseases; and a virtue went out from him, and healed them all,” (Luke v.)

Consider, thirdly, the heavenly law published on this occasion by your Redeemer, in that admirable sermon recorded by St. Matthew, (c. v, vi, vii.) In this heavenly discourse, with a most amiable simplicity, joined to a wonderful authority, he has laid down all the fundamental points of christian morality. O study well the excellent lessons which it contains; and make them the constant rule of your conduct.

Conclude daily to go up with Christ into the mountain, by retirement and prayer. Here you will find your sovereign good.

AUGUST 25.

On humility.

CONSIDER, first, that the most necessary of all mortifications is that of our *pride*, by the virtue of humility. Humility is the favorite of heaven; without it all other virtues are nothing; they even degenerate into vices, when tainted with pride. Humility makes us become little, mean, and despicable in our own eyes, and willing to appear so in the eyes of others. It makes us quite sensible of our own misery and sinfulness, and teaches us to divest ourselves of all self-conceit, and to ascribe all good to God alone.

Consider, secondly, that what makes humility so pleasing to Almighty God, is—that it gives to him what belongs to him, and to man what belongs to man; by acknowledging with all simplicity, conviction and affection, God to be *all* and man *nothing*; and by ascribing to God whatever there is of good in one's self, or in any thing created; and to ourselves nothing but our own defects. This humility was found in the greatest perfection, in the most eminent saints.

Consider, thirdly, that only the humble shall be exalted in heaven. For “except we become as little children we shall” never enter there, (Matt. xviii.) “God resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble,” (James iv.) by which alone we must expect to attain salvation. The Most High and the Most Holy, who inhabiteth eternity, will dwell with none but such as are of “a contrite and humble spirit,” (Isaiah lvii. 15.) and those who “tremble at his words,” (Isaiah lxvi. 2.)

Conclude, if you would have any part with God, in his eternal kingdom, to be always little and humble here upon earth. For “the proud and arrogant are an abomination to the Lord,” (Prov. xvi.)

AUGUST 26.

On the school of humility.

CONSIDER, first, that the true knowledge of God and of ourselves, is the school in which we must learn humility. The more we know of God and his infinite perfections, the more sensible we become of our own nothingness, and our total dependence on him:—and the more we know ourselves, our miseries and sins, the more clearly we perceive, that God alone is good, and that there is nothing good in ourselves, independently of Him.

Consider, secondly, your extraction—from nothing; that you

were conceived and born in sin; that you are liable to numberless miseries both of soul and body; that you are ever prone to evil, and hard to be brought to good; and that your thoughts, words and actions, are full of corruption. In the mean while life is fleeting and uncertain, and death will soon arraign you before an unerring tribunal, to be tried for life or death everlasting. And can you seriously think of this, and still be proud!

Consider, thirdly, what a wretched figure your soul made in the sight of God and his angels, under the guilt of mortal sin! She stood then condemned to hell; and has the sentence ever been reversed? What title then can you have to any favor from God or man? And how shall you entertain any self-conceit, or seek to be esteemed by others; since you have no title to any thing but hell?

Conclude, to frequent daily this school of humility, by studying well to know both your God and yourself: this is the most necessary of all sciences.

AUGUST 27.

Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, (Matt. xi. 29.)

CONSIDER, first, that the Son of God himself came down from heaven, to teach us true humility by his own example; and for this end he became a little one amongst us; yea, "as a worm and no man,—the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people," (Ps. xxi.) And yet, how few are there of us content to be little and contemptible with him! How few are willing to be scholars of this heavenly Master, or even to submit to the least humiliation for the love of him!

Consider, secondly, that our blessed Redeemer, pressing us all to "come to him, and to take up his yoke upon us, and to learn of him, because he is meek and humble of heart;" promises at the same time "refreshment and rest to our souls," upon our compliance with his invitation. What then should deter us from frequenting this heavenly school of Christ? Its excellent advantages are peace of mind, refreshment and rest from our labors, a victory over all our passions, and a happy acquisition of all virtues.

Consider, thirdly, that the whole life of our Lord was full of lessons of humility. He chose to be born in a stable; to be circumcised as a sinner; to flee into Egypt, as if he were unable to resist a petty mortal; to be brought up in poverty and labor; to be obedient to his creatures; to suffer himself to be tempted by Satan; in a word, to embrace on all occasions, both in life

and death, whatever was most humbling, and most despicable in the eyes of men.

Conclude, never to lose sight of the doctrine and example of Jesus Christ; and learn of him to be truly humble.

AUGUST 28.

On the fruits of humility.

CONSIDER, first, that *faith* itself, which is commonly looked upon as the foundation of all our good, absolutely depends upon *humility*: even that humility which obliges the soul to adore what she cannot understand, to submit to the most humbling truths, and to "cast down every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every understanding to the obedience of Christ," (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) It is also humility which in *divine hope* keeps the soul between the two extremes of diffidence and presumption. For the less we trust in ourselves the more we trust in God.

Consider, secondly, that *charity*, the queen of virtues, must be supported by humility: because humility furnishes the soul with the most pressing motives to love her God. It sets his goodness in its proper light, and makes us admire that he, being what he is, should have any regard for us, or even bear with such sinful wretches as we are. And with regard to the love of our neighbors, it cannot exist without humility. For all the vices which oppose and destroy fraternal charity, for instance, hatred, envy, rash judgment, detraction, and the like, all spring from pride.

Consider, thirdly, that "the prayer of him that humbleth himself, shall pierce the clouds, and will not depart till the Most High behold him," (Eccles. xxxv. 21.) And that God "hath regard to the prayer of the humble, and despiseth not their petitions," [Ps. ci. 18.] And "that from the beginning the proud have never been acceptable to him: but the prayer of the humble, and of the meek, hath always pleased him," [Judith ix. 10.] Even the prayer of the greatest sinners, when presented with "a contrite and humble heart," is not *despised*, [Ps. l.]

Conclude to study daily, this most excellent virtue of humility. It must be the foundation of all your happiness.

AUGUST 29.

On the other advantages of humility.

CONSIDER, first, that the moral, as well as the theological virtues, have all a necessary dependence on humility. That *prudence* will come to nothing, which is self-conceited, and does not rest on God. *Justice* will be deficient in many of its branches, if corrupted by pride, which always makes men partial to themselves, and ever ready to judge, censure, condemn, and despise their neighbors. That *fortitude* will fail, which, for want of humility, is void of a proper foundation: and that *temperance* can never be perfect, which while it restrains the sensual appetite, does not also cut off the irregularities of the heart, the chief of which is pride.

Consider, secondly, that meekness, poverty of spirit, purity, and chastity, are all the offspring of humility; and the most shameful falls into the worst of impurities are often the punishment of pride, [Rom. i. 24.] Modesty without humility deserves not the name of virtue. Obedience too, springs from humility, as disobedience is the first born of pride. Patience under afflictions, and perfect conformity to the blessed will of God, are also the inseparable companions of this virtue, and bring with them the happy fruits of inward tranquility and peace.

Consider, thirdly, that the more humble we are, the greater sense we have of our sins. Hence flows a sincere desire of atoning for them by the virtue of penance. Humility opens our eyes to see our own great weakness, and the dangers which surround us on all sides, from the devil, the world, and our own passions, especially that unhappy self-love, the root of all our evils. In order to subdue this, it calls in self-denial. And thus all virtues depend upon humility.

Conclude to embrace humility, as the only path to christian perfection and eternal life.

AUGUST 30.

On the degrees of humility.

CONSIDER, first, that true humility does not consist in saying we are sinners, or the like; nor yet in wearing a plain dress, or employing ourselves in mean offices: all this may be done out of pride, and to acquire the esteem of others by the outward show of humility. There is no true humility but that of the heart; we must despise ourselves from a conviction of

our own nothingness, and be willing to be thought little of by others. Without this, we are not truly humble.

Consider, secondly, that the first degree of humility is—to have such a knowledge of ourselves, and of all our miseries and sins, as to be feelingly convinced we have nothing to be proud of, but every reason to be thoroughly humble; since there is nothing good in us of our own, and of ourselves we are capable of nothing but evil. And yet, how much does this unhappy pride prevail, in spite of all these motives of humility!

Consider, thirdly, that the second degree of true humility makes us willing that others also, should have the same mean opinion of us, as we have of ourselves: and indeed as in other things we wish our neighbors to think as we do, did we sincerely despise ourselves, we should certainly be glad, that others should despise us in the like manner. The third and most sublime degree of humility is that of the saints, who ascribe all their virtues to God alone, and are so much the more mean in their own eyes, as they are more exalted by his grace.

Conclude to ascend from virtue to virtue by the help of the knowledge of yourself; and not to rest till you arrive at the perfection of humility.

AUGUST 31.

On the practice of humility.

CONSIDER, first, that as patience is best learned by sufferings and crosses; so humility must be learned by practice. Hence we must endeavor to welcome the humiliations which are sent us either immediately from God, or from the hand of men; and embrace them in such manner, as to take occasion from them to humble ourselves daily, both to God and man. If they be attended with the evil of sin, either in ourselves or others, we must, indeed, abhor the sin, but receive with joy the humiliation.

Consider, secondly, that the practice of humility must be acquired gradually. We may begin, for instance, 1. by not seeking, in any thing we do, the praise or esteem of others, nor say any word tending, directly or indirectly, to our own praise. 2. By never seeking to excuse our faults, or to throw the blame upon others. 3. By taking no pleasure in hearing ourselves commended. 4. By shunning all occasions of applause, as far as duty will allow.

Consider, secondly, that we must also put away all self-esteem, and learn to despise ourselves from our hearts, and to

"sit down in the lowest place," by giving the preference to every one else. Then, we must bear with meekness and patience, our being despised, reproached or affronted by others. In the next place, we must learn to take a pleasure in contempt. And lastly, we must rejoice with the apostle, that we are crucified to the world and the world to us.

Conclude, with alacrity to go through the whole course of this heavenly science : it is the science of the saints.

SEPTEMBER 1.

On the eight beatitudes, (Matth. v.)

CONSIDER, first, that our blessed Saviour has briefly delivered, in his first sermon upon the Mount, the principal maxims of true wisdom and of christian morality, comprised in what we commonly call the eight beatitudes. Christians, we all desire to be happy for ever : and behold the wisdom of God, which can neither deceive nor be deceived, declares to us, in clear and distinct terms, what is to make us happy here, and to conduct us safe to never-ending felicity.

Consider, secondly, that the boasted sages of antiquity, with all their pretensions to wisdom, were strangely in the dark with regard to man's true happiness, his sovereign good, and his last end : not one of them all ever came near the truth. And as they knew not the end, so they were strangers to the true means which were to bring us to this end. They never once imagined that to be poor in spirit, to be meek, to suffer persecution, was the way to happiness ; much less did they suspect that persons under these circumstances were actually happy. This was a lesson to be taught only by the Son of God.

Consider, thirdly, how unhappy are all those, who under the name of christians or of disciples of this divine master, take no notice of the lessons which he came from heaven to teach, but live in an affected ignorance of them ; who, pronounce those miserable, whom he declares to be *blessed* ; and those alone happy, who abound in riches and sensual pleasures, notwithstanding he denounces against them his woe. And do these people seriously believe the gospel ?

Conclude, if you wish to attain to a blissful immortality, to make your way thither by the esteem and practice of the eight beatitudes.

SEPTEMBER 2.

On poverty of spirit.

CONSIDER, first, that the first beatitude, expressed in these words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," belongs in the first place to such as are poor by condition and in effects, (Luke vi. 20.) provided they be content with their poverty, and embrace it as what the wisdom of God preferred for himself and his choicest favorites. The men of riches, he tells us, "have their consolation here;" but they who are truly poor in spirit in this world, shall be *rich* in eternity.

Consider, secondly, that this beatitude belongs also to the poor in affection, who are willing to resign their riches whenever God requires all, or any part of them; likewise—to those who are poor by choice, when they understand that God inspires them to relinquish them and follow him. In a word, to all as are disengaged from perishable things and whatever is not God, and sigh after the possession of him alone.

Consider, thirdly, that the humble are in a particular manner entitled to this beatitude. For they are truly poor in spirit. These have not their minds puffed up with pride and self-conceit, like him to whom it is said [Apoc. iii. 17.] "Thou sayest I am rich and made wealthy; and I have need of nothing; and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Conclude to enter the school of Christ, by leaving, in affection at least, all things else to follow him.

SEPTEMBER 3.

On meekness.

CONSIDER, first, that these two virtues of poverty of spirit and meekness are nearly allied to each other, and inseparable companions. Meekness restrains all anger and passion, keeps in all heat or violence of words, stills the tumults of the soul, and allows no thoughts of any other than that truly christian revenge—"of overcoming evil with good." Whoever shall persevere in doing this, shall for his reward "possess the land, even the land of the living."

Consider, secondly, what St. Peter tells us, concerning our great model, Jesus Christ. "When he was reviled, he did not revile; when he suffered he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly," [Peter ii. 23.] This sweet and gentle behavior, this evenness of soul, this courtesy

in words, and affability towards all men, joined with true humility of heart, is the proper livery of Jesus and his followers, and was in the ancient disciples more effectual, in order to the conversion of the world, than even miracles, without humility and meekness.

Consider, thirdly that in order to acquire the virtue of meekness, and to obtain a complete victory over anger and passion, and their evil consequences, we must watch over our own hearts, that we be not surprised by any temptations; and we must arm ourselves with the grace of God, by earnest prayer. Thus we shall be enabled to encounter these our spiritual enemies with advantage, and baffle all their efforts to destroy us.

Conclude, with all diligence, to learn of Jesus to be meek and humble of heart: it is the only way to present peace and future happiness.

SEPTEMBER 4.

On mourning.

CONSIDER, first, that the children of this world esteem mirth, and jolity, and pastimes, and worldly pleasures, the chief ingredients of a happy life. But they are certainly deceived: for HE who cannot err, has pronounced a curse against "them that laugh now; for that they shall mourn, and weep," [Luke vi. 25.] while, on the contrary, he declares those happy that now weep and mourn. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

Consider, secondly, that this mourning does not mean worldly sadness, of which it is written, [Eccles. xxx. 25.] "Sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it." And, [2 Cor. vii. 10.] "The sorrow of the world worketh death." Nor a sullen melancholy, or any such mourning as is turbulent, impatient, full of despondency: but a more calm and peaceful *mourning*—namely, of sorrow for our sins and those of our neighbors, by daily lamenting the dismal evils which attend them, and our long and wretched banishment, in the midst of temptations and continual dangers.

Consider, thirdly, that they who *mourn* in this manner, "shall be comforted"—in this life, with the sweet visitations and graces of the Spirit of God, the satisfaction and peace of a good conscience, and the inexpressible delight of divine love; one hour of which affords more contentment to the soul than many years of worldly enjoyment:—and in the life to come they shall be comforted without measure, for endless ages.

Conclude to *mourn* now, that you may rejoice for ever

hereafter; and remember, that they who "sow in tears, shall reap in joy," [Ps. cxxv. 5.]

SEPTEMBER 5.

On hungering and thirsting after justice.

CONSIDER, first, that to desire to be good, is indeed the beginning of all good; as the desire of wisdom, according to scripture, is the beginning of wisdom; the desire of the love of God is the beginning of the love of God; and so of all other virtues. But this desire must not be a half desire, like that of the sluggard of whom the wise man says, that "he willeth and he willeth not," [Proverbs xiii. 4.] but a full and earnest desire. And that is that hunger and thirst after divine love and all true justice, which shall at length obtain what it so earnestly seeks and desires.

Consider, secondly, that by this hunger and thirst, we seek the justice of God in ourselves, in our neighbors, and in himself. We hunger and thirst after the justice of God in ourselves, when we earnestly desire that we ourselves, by the grace of God, "may fulfil all justice," and acquit ourselves well of every branch of our duty. We hunger and thirst after the justice of God in our neighbor, when we earnestly desire and promote the knowledge, love, and service of God in all others. And we hunger and thirst after the justice of God in himself, by seeking in all things his greater glory, and the perfect accomplishment of his holy will.

Consider, thirdly, the reward of this most desirable hunger and thirst; for it shall be filled, here with divine grace, with true devotion, with heavenly charity, with all christian virtues and the fruits of the Holy Ghost; and hereafter with the beatific vision and the eternal enjoyment of God himself, according to that of the Psalmist, "I shall be faithful when thy glory shall appear," [Ps. xvi. 15.]

Conclude to direct your appetite towards the "good things of the Lord in the land of the living," by constantly "fulfilling all justice."

SEPTEMBER 6.

On being merciful.

CONSIDER, first, that all our good must come from God; and as we have rendered ourselves by our sins absolutely unworthy

of any good at all, we have no appeal but to the divine mercy alone, by which we may appease his wrath, and obtain his favor. Hence the finding of mercy with God is all things; and the means of finding it is mercy to one another. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Consider, secondly, that the word of God recommends—1. The "corporal works of mercy;" for instance, by alms-deeds, by feeding and clothing the poor, by visiting and relieving the sick or the imprisoned. Such works as these, according to scripture, [Tobias xii. 9.] "deliver from death; they purge away sins, and make us find mercy," and life everlasting. 2. "The spiritual works of mercy,"—by relieving our neighbors in their spiritual necessities, giving them good counsel or instruction, comforting them under their afflictions, encouraging them in temptations; and especially by recalling them from their errors and vices, and thus rescuing their souls from the second and everlasting death.

Consider, thirdly, the reward promised to the merciful: namely, "that they shall obtain mercy," both here, as well temporally as spiritually, by having their own wants redressed, and their sins forgiven them; and hereafter, in the eternal enjoyment of heaven. Alas! how wretched shall the best of us be, unless God shows us mercy! For who can abide his judgment, if his mercy be set aside! How unhappy then, are they who refuse to show mercy to their neighbors! For "judgment without mercy to them that have not done mercy," [James ii. 13.]

Conclude to embrace with all affection this amiable virtue of mercy. She is the daughter of the great King, and will conduct all those who love her, to his eternal kingdom.

SEPTEMBER 7.

On cleanness of heart.

CONSIDER, first, that the interior eye of the soul, in order to see God, must be *clean*; and this cleanness of the inward eye requires two things, viz: *simplicity* in the intention, and purity in the affection: *simplicity* aims at God alone; and purity embraces and adheres to him. Wherefore, let God be the great object of your love, so as to allow no affection to take off your heart from him; and it will be truly pure, and qualified to contemplate and embrace its Sovereign good.

Consider, secondly, the degrees by which we ascend to this perfect purity and cleanness of heart. The first and most necessary purification is for all deadly sin, and for the affections to it. For the heart which voluntarily admits of the af-

fections to mortal sin, whether of impurity or any other vice, is absolutely *unclean*, and is possessed by an *unclean* spirit; and therefore can have no share in God. The second purification cleanses from all wilful affection to venial sin, and fixes her in a resolution never, with full deliberation, to commit a known venial sin,—much less to indulge a habit of venial offences.

Consider, thirdly, that in order to be perfectly clean of heart, we must be disengaged from all affection to worldly honors, riches, and pleasures; and from whatever takes off any part of the heart from God, or is not loved with reference to him. Every love which cannot stand this test, is more or less an *unclean* love, and disqualifies the heart for seeing God.

Conclude daily to purify your heart more and more from all sensual and worldly attachments: thus you will be made worthy to *see God* face to face, in his glory.

SEPTEMBER 8.

On the nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

CONSIDER, first, that the birth of that holy mother of God was like the dawning of that happy day, which the Son of God, the true *sun of justice*, caused to shine upon us who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Wherefore, on this festival, we must praise and bless God for all his graces bestowed upon the blessed Virgin, whom he prepared from her very conception, to be a worthy dwelling for his Son, holy and without spot or blemish. Second, to honor him in her, and to rejoice in the wonders of his power and goodness, by which he paved the way for our redemption. Third, to imitate the virtues of our blessed Lady, and earnestly implore her intercession.

Consider, secondly, the title which the most blessed Virgin has to our veneration. First, her *dignity of mother of God*, the nearest *alliance* which any pure creature can have with him. Second, her spotless sanctity; for she was full of divine grace, even before she conceived, (Luke i. 26.) and much more after bearing in her womb the source of all grace and sanctity, and entertaining him under her roof for thirty years; during which, and for the remainder of her life, this grace in her continually increased. Third, her exaltation to the highest place in heaven, next to her divine Son; and her great favor in his sight.

Consider, thirdly, that as God is the sole author and the original source of all the dignity, sanctity, and glory, which we honor in the blessed Virgin; so all that veneration which the

Catholic Church pays to this blessed Lady, has God both for its beginning and its end. Our devotion to her proceeds from the love we bear her Son: we honor in *her*, his gifts and graces: we love and honor *her* for *his* sake; and all the extraordinary respect we at any time show to *her*, we refer to *his* greater glory. So far, then, from robbing God of his honor by our veneration for *her*, we honor *him* indeed the more—because, all this our devotion finally tends to Him, and terminates in Him. Thus we always find, that such as are truly devout to the blessed Virgin, fail not also to be true lovers of God, and “pursuers of all good works.”

Conclude always to entertain a true and solid devotion to the holy mother of God; which cannot be without an imitation of her virtues.

SEPTEMBER 9.

On being peace-makers.

CONSIDER, first, that those who truly love peace, and, as much as lies in them, both *keep* it in themselves and with all others; who contribute what they can to restore peace among those at variance, and to induce all their neighbors to make their peace with God, “shall be called the children of God. How lovely indeed is this spirit of peace! how blessed are its fruits! It is the paradise of the soul, and makes a kind of heaven upon earth.

Consider, secondly, how desirable a thing it is, to bring our neighbors to *peace* and mutual charity: on the contrary, how abominable in the sight of God, “to sow discord among brethren,” (Prov. vi. 19.) But it is still a more desirable thing to make *peace* at home in our own souls, by subduing our passions and bring the flesh under subjection to the spirit: and the most desirable thing of all, to bring both ourselves and as many others as we can, to a constant and perfect *peace* with God, by doing in all things his holy will. This is the surest way both to a present and everlasting peace.

Consider, thirdly, what a dignity it is to be the children of God. “Behold what manner of charity,” says St. John, “the Father hath bestowed upon us; that we should be called, and should be the sons of God,” (1 John iii. 1.) *Sons of God* even now by his-grace, bearing a resemblance with his true Son, who is styled in scripture “the prince of peace;” and hereafter, in the enjoyment of his eternal rest.

Conclude on all occasions to espouse the cause of peace. Thus *the peace* of God will always *rest upon you*, (Luke x. 6.)

SEPTEMBER 10.

On the means of preserving internal peace.

CONSIDER, first, that it is of great advantage to the soul, to keep herself always in *peace* within her own interior: because this inward peace when true, is attended with courage, strength, and grace, which God imparts to the truly *peaceable*. The first and most necessary means for acquiring or preserving this peace of the soul, must be to banish thence all wilful sin; for none but a false peace can dwell with wilful sin. O dear Jesus, suffer me not to be deluded by this false peace, nor ever be a rebel to thy light!

Consider, secondly, that the true peace of the soul, is not to be acquired without subduing the passions. In effect, what peace can there be for the slaves of pride and ambition; of avarice and worldly solicitude; of hatred and envy? Alas! all these and the like passions disturb and disquiet the soul, and suffer her not to find any solid rest. Ah! how true it is, that our peace and happiness, even here, is not to be found by yielding to our disorderly inclinations, but by mortifying and overcoming them!

Consider, thirdly, that the way to acquire true peace and liberty of soul is thus traced out in The Following of Christ, (b. 3, ch. 23.) "Endeavor, my son, rather to do the will of another than thy own; always choose rather to have less than more; always seek the lowest place, and to be subject to every one; always wish and pray that the will of God may be entirely fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man as this, enters upon the coast of peace and rest," and will find a paradise of delights in his own soul.

Conclude to pursue this happy way which leads to true peace: give up your own desires and heartily embrace the holy will of God.

SEPTEMBER 11.

On suffering persecution for justice sake.

CONSIDER, first, that men are apt to pity all those, and look upon them as unhappy, who are exposed to evil treatment. So far from rejoicing when it is their own case, they are sad and sorrowful. But surely they are in the wrong; since truth itself, which cannot be deceived, assures us that even now, when actually in a state of suffering, we are happy and *blessed*, and bids us rejoice under these reputed evils. "Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you for my

sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."

Consider, secondly, that these happy sufferings entitle the soul to the sweet consolations of the Holy Ghost, which are usually more abundant, in proportion to the greatness of the suffering. "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul," (Ps. xciii. 19.) These sufferings give the soul a relish for the cross, and a new kind of love for her crucified Saviour. They wean her from the love of this world and its empty toys, and teach her humility, meekness, and patience; besides the advantage of cancelling the debt of punishment for former offences, by bearing in a christian manner these present afflictions.

Consider, thirdly, the immense rewards of a future life, promised to patient suffering in this cause. "If we suffer with Christ," says the apostle, (Rom. vii.) "we shall be glorified with him: For the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." And again, (2 Cor. iv.) "Our present tribulation which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." Look forward then, towards this glorious eternity, and learn to *rejoice* in your momentary afflictions.

Conclude *not* to be "ashamed to suffer as a christian; but rather glorify God in this name," (1 Peter iv.)

SEPTEMBER 12.

On patience.

CONSIDER, first, that *patience* is a virtue, by which we bear up, with courage and constancy, under a variety of evils, to which we are continually exposed in this mortal life. It teaches us, neither to be too much dejected by any cross accidents or sufferings, nor upon these occasions to be drawn from the love and service of God, or murmur at his providence. How lovely is this christian virtue! It sweetens whatever is naturally bitter in afflictions, by the consideration of the holy will of God.

Consider, secondly, how much this virtue of *patience* is recommended to us by the great example of the Son of God; who, as he was never free from sufferings in any part of his life,—died, as he had lived, in the exercise of *patience*, and by his *patience* redeemed the world. All the saints and martyrs had their share in drinking of his cup of sufferings, and have all "run by patience to the sight set before them, looking

on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; who having joy set before him, endured the cross," &c., (Heb. xii.)

Consider, thirdly, the absolute necessity of *patience* in order to salvation. "Patience is necessary for you," saith the apostle, (Heb. x. 36.) "that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." For our life is a warfare upon earth, and in every part of life we must expect to meet with trials and sufferings. *Patience* turns all these into good; but where *patience* is wanting, all goes wrong: we sin at every step; we cowardly give up the cause of God and our souls, and yield an easy victory to our mortal enemies.

Conclude, on all occasions to exercise the virtue of *patience*, both in life, and in death; it will conduct you to your Lord.

SEPTEMBER 13.

On the means of acquiring patience.

CONSIDER, first, that if we wish to acquire the virtue of *patience*, we must heartily desire and pray for it. "If any one want this true wisdom," says St. James, (chap. i.) "let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly—and it shall be given him: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Did we seriously consider its happy fruits; that it gives a complete victory over all our enemies; peace of soul, true liberty and dominion over all our passions, and hereafter a blissful immortality; we should want no further inducement to make us fervent in our petition.

Consider, secondly, how very little what we suffer is, in comparison with what we deserve by our sins. Second, how grievous were those sufferings, which our dear Redeemer willingly endured for our salvation. Third, that our sufferings are ordained by Almighty God, for our greater good. What motives these for patience, under all afflictions!

Consider, thirdly, the manifold evils which attend impatience, in a multitude of sins,—against God,—against our neighbor,—and against ourselves. Murmurings and rebellions against God; uncharitable censures and rash judgments, perpetual animosities, quarrels and desires of revenge, against our neighbors; desires of our own death, though infinitely unfit for it; continual uneasiness, desponding thoughts, and a strange backwardness in the concern of salvation,—against ourselves: and what can be more dismal?

Conclude to pray and labor in earnest, for the virtue of *patience*; it will make all your sufferings light and easy, and entitle them to an eternal reward.

SEPTEMBER 14.

On the exaltation of the cross.

CONSIDER, first, that on this day of the recovery of the cross of Christ out of the hands of infidels, the Church of God celebrates the exaltation of Him who died for us upon the *cross*, and his glorious triumph over sin and death, and the powers of darkness. Do thou also rejoice, my soul, in the triumphs of thy crucified king, beg him to establish his reign in thee, and unite thee for ever to himself.

Consider, secondly, that the dispositions of a christian, in order to celebrate, in a proper manner, the feast of *the exaltation of the cross*, ought to be suitable to the maxims of the cross, and to the dispositions of Christ crucified. How very unfit then are we to commemorate the victories of our crucified Redeemer over sin and hell, while by pride, self-love, and the love of the world, we wilfully remain slaves to those same enemies, whose usurpation he sought to abolish by his death.

Consider, thirdly, the sentiments of St. Paul with relation to the cross of Christ, (Gal. ii. 19, 20.) "With Christ I am nailed to the cross. I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me." O how high was the cross of Christ *exalted* in the heart of this apostle! It reigned there without control: and as it was implanted in him by his love of suffering in the cause of his divine master; so it exalted him, here, to the glorious "fellowship of the sufferings" of Christ crucified; and hereafter, to that eternal kingdom, which our Lord has purchased by his cross, for all its true friends and followers.

Conclude, with this apostle, to be a sincere lover of the cross of Christ; and, with him, you shall be exalted to a heavenly kingdom.

SEPTEMBER 15.

On the presence of God.

CONSIDER, first, that it is an article of faith which no christian can be allowed to doubt, that the great God who made us all, is every where present; is truly and really in every place and in every being. "Shall a man be hid in secret places, and I not see him," saith the Lord? "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" [Jerem. xxiii.] "Whither shall I go from thy spirit," saith the psalmist? "Or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I descend into hell, thou art there, (Ps. cxxxviii.)

Consider, secondly, that God being every where present, is

witness of all our actions, and even of our secret thoughts. He is the searcher of the reins and heart," (Apoc. ii. 23.) "reaching to the division of the soul, and of the spirit; and is a discerner of the thoughts, and of the intents of the heart: all things are naked and open to his eyes," (Heb. iv. 12, 13.) In vain does the sinner flatter himself, like the libertine that saith: "Who seeth me? Darkness encompasseth me about, and the walls cover me, and no man seeth me; whom do I fear?" (Eccles. xxiii.) Alas! he reflects not that "darkness and light are alike to the Lord," (Ps. cxxxviii.)

Consider, thirdly, that God is not only present *with us*, in every place; but really *within us*: he fills our whole soul. "In him we live, and move, and be," saith the apostle, (Acts xvii. 23.) And were he to withdraw his presence for one moment from any being whatever, in that moment it would cease to be. Alas! how greatly must this circumstance increase the guilt of all our offences!

Conclude, henceforward, always to think of God, who is always present in the very midst of yourself; and let this thought effectually deter you from wilful sin.

SEPTEMBER 16.

On the exercise of the presence of God.

CONSIDER, first, that a lively sense of the presence of God is a sovereign mean to banish sin from the world, and to make us advance in perfection; according to that which God spake to his servant Abraham, (Gen. xvii. 1.) "Walk before me, and be perfect." This holy patriarch, and all the ancient fathers observed this lesson. Of them it is written, that they "walked with God," or that they "walked in the sight of God," (Gen. xlviii.) The psalmist practiced the same: "I set the Lord," saith he, "always in my sight," (Ps. xv. 8.) And he calls upon all others to do the like, (Ps. civ. 4.)

Consider, secondly, that this exercise of divine presence employs the understanding in the thought and remembrance of God, by means of a lively faith and sense of his being always with us, and within us; and entertains the will, or the heart and the affection, with him, by frequent breathings of love; by repeatedly offering our whole being to him; and by longing desires of an eternal union with him. Thus we may learn, even during our mortal pilgrimage, to anticipate in some sense the immortal joys of heaven.

Consider, thirdly, that we must begin by banishing from ourselves, first, dissipation of mind; second, anxious solicitude for the things of this world; third, a disorderly attachment to

creatures. Dissipation of thought causes the soul to run after a multitude of vain amusements, in which she looses the remembrance both of herself, and of her God. Worldly solicitude stifles all better thoughts; and the disorderly affections of the heart turn it from God to creatures. We must banish dissipation by recollection of thought, worldly solicitude by faith and confidence in God, and the irregularity of our affections, by fixing them on him alone.

Conclude, habitually to employ all the powers of your soul about your God, who will make you happy for eternity.

SEPTEMBER 17.

On the fruits of attention to the presence of God.

CONSIDER, first, that as the forgetting of God is the source of all our sins; so, the remembrance of his divine presence is the source of all our good: It is a sovereign and universal antidote against all temptations; for who shall dare to affront the divine justice by yielding to wilful sin, who has a lively sense of its being so very near him, and that it is always turned against wilful sinners?

Consider, secondly, that a lively sense of the presence of God, excites us also to perform all our works with due perfection, in order to please our great Master, whose eye is always upon us. It banishes distractions in time of prayer; it makes us fervent in all our addresses to the divine Majesty; it nourishes humility, and perfectly annihilates the soul, while she sees herself placed so near the immense Deity. In a word, he that has a lively sense of the presence of so tender a Father, who is ever willing to comfort and relieve his children in their necessities, under all his afflictions, wants, and perplexities, has a never-failing source of consolation and redress.

Consider, thirdly, that the belief of the presence of God in all places, requires of us, first, that we should every where take notice of his presence: for there cannot be an object so worthy our attention. Second, it requires in us a modest comportment on all occasions, as to our exterior. "Let your modesty," says St. Paul, "be known to all men; the Lord is nigh:" and a most profound respect, as to our interior, for that infinite majesty in whose sight we stand. Third, God being every where present, every where commands our love: for, wherever we are we have Him with us, who is infinitely lovely and infinitely loving. How easy then must it be, with such helps as these, to be a saint!

Conclude never to regret your being alone, since you have

always in your company that great God, who is the eternal felicity of the angels.

SEPTEMBER 18.

On the virtue of obedience.

CONSIDER, first, that obedience is a virtue by which we cheerfully and diligently execute whatever is commanded us, either directly by God himself, or by our lawful superiors, who have their authority from God. This virtue, like humility from which it springs, is the special favorite of heaven. "Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims," said Samuel to Saul, (1 Sam. xv.) and not rather that his voice should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken, rather than to offer the fat of rams. God demands the sacrifice of our hearts,—not that of our flocks, or any thing we can give him without obedience.

Consider, secondly, the dreadful evils entailed upon us all by the *disobedience* of our first parent. Evils which must have been without remedy to eternity, had not the *obedience* of our blessed Saviour cancelled his offence. According to that of the apostle, (Rom. v. 19.) "As by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one man many shall be made just." But this only on condition that we return to our duty, by *obedience* to Him, who "became the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey him," (Heb. v. 9.)

Consider, thirdly, that it was the general maxim of all the saints—rather to die than not to obey. But the perfect model of obedience was the Saint of Saints, whose whole life, from the first instant of his conception till his expiring upon the cross, was one continued exercise of the most consummate *obedience*. "He humbled himself," says St. Paul, "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" (Philippians ii. 8.) that we too, might enter into the like sentiments of obedience and humility, (verse 5.)

Conclude to be ever obedient—to God himself for his own sake, "and to every human creature for God's sake," (1 Peter ii. 13.) In obeying lawful authority, whether in church or state, you obey God himself.

SEPTEMBER 19.

On the fruits of obedience.

CONSIDER, first, that one of the deepest wounds which sin has left in the soul of man, is a love of independence, without being controlled by rule or law, or by the will of any other. Here is the seat of pride, the throne of self-love, the source of the worst of our passions. The only remedy is an humble *obedience*, which strikes at the root of all these evils, and obliges all the passions to submit to the will and law of God, and that of his vicegerents.

Consider, secondly, that self-will is the cause of all kinds of evils. "Take away self-will," says St. Bernard; "and there shall be no hell. This fury attacks the Lord of Majesty; it withdraws itself from his command." It even blasts and corrupts the very best of our actions; insomuch that, when a man does not strive to overcome himself, and to subdue self-will, his virtues will prove counterfeit, and all his labors fruitless; because they proceed from his own humor, and not from God.

Consider, thirdly, that a life of *obedience* is a perpetual victory: for "an obedient man," saith the word of God, "shall speak of victory," (Prov. xxi. 28.) Obedience gives a double value to all our good actions, and sanctifies the most indifferent: for instance, eating, drinking, sleeping and the like; and makes them acceptable in the sight of God. In a word, it gives the soul a sweet and secure peace, and a certain paradise of contentment and joy in the Lord, and in the accomplishment of his blessed will.

Conclude, in every station of life to obey those, to whom God has given any authority over you: it is absolutely his will you should do so.

SEPTEMBER 20.*On keeping the commandments.*

CONSIDER, first, that the ten commandments are a short abstract of that natural and eternal law, imprinted in the heart of man before the written law was delivered to the chosen people. They were published by the Almighty in a most solemn manner from Mount Sina, in the Old Testament, and were confirmed by the Son of God, in the New. He declares the observance of them to be a necessary condition to everlasting life: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," (Matt. xix. 17.) He "that saith he knoweth God, and keep-

eth not his commandments," says St. John, "is a liar, and the truth is not him," (1 John ii. 4.)

Consider, secondly, what happiness accompanies the observance of God's holy law and commandments. "The law of the Lord," says the royal prophet in the eighteenth psalm, "is unspotted, converting souls: the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones: the justices of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts: the commandment of the Lord is light-some, enlightening the eyes—more to be desired than gold and many precious stones: and sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb. And in keeping them there is a great reward."

Consider, thirdly, that the commandments of God are indeed very sweet and easy, "to men of good will." Our Lord himself assures us, that his yoke is sweet and his burden light, and affords rest and refreshment to our souls, (Matth. xi. 29.) St. John tells us that the divine commandments are not heavy, (1 John v. 3.) Love makes all things, done for the sake of the beloved, easy; and therefore the true lover of God feels no labor in keeping his commandments: the divine grace makes them all to him sweet and agreeable.

Conclude to seek your happiness, both for time and eternity, in the observance of the law and commandments of God. Nothing else can make you happy.

SEPTEMBER 21.

On St. Matthew.

CONSIDER, first, in St. Matthew the wonders of divine grace. Of a worldling and a publican, he was made an apostle, a pillar in the Church of Christ, a father and a converter of nations, and one of the four evangelists. Learn from this example, never to despair of the conversion of any one, however remote it may seem to be at present. The arm of God is not shortened: the blame is then our own, if we do not, like St. Matthew, attend to the calls of heaven, but rather prefer sitting still in the custom-house of the world, enslaved to many vain and sinful affections.

Consider, secondly, that St. Matthew instantly obeyed the first call of grace, with his whole heart. We, too, have often been called to follow Christ: but have we ever yet obeyed the call? This *follow thou me* which our Lord addressed to Matthew, is indeed addressed by him to all christians, as their very name implies: and yet, among these, how very few follow in practice either the doctrine or the example of Christ! Our Lord was *passing by* when he called St. Matthew. Very probably, had this call been neglected, he might never have

avored him with the like grace thereafter. Let this be a warning to us not to neglect the grace of God.

Consider, thirdly, that St. Matthew, out of gratitude for so great a favor, immediately upon his conversion made a feast for our Saviour, at which were present many publicans and sinners, who also followed our Lord, (Mark ii. 15.) Behold the force of good example, and how one perfect conversion occasions many others. This conversion of souls was a more agreeable feast to the charity of our divine Redeemer, than any other entertainment.

Conclude to imitate St. Matthew, by a ready compliance with divine grace. Let your example conduce, in like manner, to draw others to the service of God.

SEPTEMBER 22.

The divine worship enjoined by the first commandment.

CONSIDER, first, that the Lord himself, the great Creator of heaven and earth, is our lawgiver. "I am," saith he, "the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." By these last words he insinuates the particular obligation of the children of Israel to keep his commandments, because he had delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt. How much more pressing motives have we christians to observe his divine laws, whom he has delivered from the far worse slavery of Satan, and of hell; and this too by the precious blood of his only Son!

Consider, secondly, that those words, "I am the Lord thy God," though not expressed in the form of a command, insinuate, nevertheless, the whole duty of man, with regard to his God. By this he is bound to worship him with an entire *faith* of all his divine truths; a lively *hope* in his infinite goodness, mercy, and power; an ardent *charity* or love of him above all things: and by the virtue of religion, which worships him "in spirit and truth," according to the form revealed by him to his Church.

Consider, thirdly, that by these words—"thou shalt not have strange Gods before me," we are commanded to renounce all that kind of ungodliness, which may any way corrupt the divine worship, with idolatry, superstition, and error. But we must also be truly *godly*, and apply ourselves seriously to the love and service of our Maker. For what will it avail us *to know God*, if we do not "glorify him as God?" Will not this be "detaining the truth of God in injustice?" (Rom. i. 18.) The great end of our creation was—to *glorify* God, and to consecrate our whole lives to his service: and thus alone shall we fulfil the first commandment.

Conclude, to dedicate your whole being henceforth and for ever, to your God. This is the whole duty of man.

SEPTEMBER 23.

On the prohibition of idol-worship.

CONSIDER, first, that the making or worshipping of *idols*, is also forbidden by the first commandment: under which name is prohibited the setting up of any image or other thing, to honor it with any part of divine honor. But this kind of idolatry which consists in serving stocks and stones, has for many ages been abolished in all christian nations. The idols more to be apprehended at the present day, are those of erroneous and heretical doctrines, set up and worshipped for divine truths, in spite of the church of God, whose authority is so strongly established in holy scripture.

Consider, secondly, that proud and ambitious christians make an idol of their worldly honor; the covetous and the voluptuous, of their riches and sensual pleasures. All these, in the language of St. Paul are *idolaters*: because they all "worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever," (Rom. i. 25.) Have you no share in this kind of idolatry? Is there no predominant passion which with you takes place of God, and causes you to offend? Ah! do you not frequently sacrifice every thing to that great idol *self*? It is well if you do not.

Consider, thirdly, that superstition also, is forbidden by the first commandment. Of this crime, all those in the first place, are highly guilty, who seek any knowledge, cure or help from the enemy of God and man, in the use of instruments or means which can have no effect of their own nature, but only through his concurrence. In all these cases there is a secret compact made with Satan or his agents; which is a crime of high treason against God. The observance of lucky and unlucky days, omens, dreams, and the like, is also strictly forbidden. It is, moreover, superstition, to place religion in certain empty things, which have no reference to the divine service; or to pretend to obtain miraculous favors or salvation, by the use or practice of anything not warranted by scripture or the Church of God.

Conclude to renounce in practice every branch of *idol worship* and *superstition*; and let the Lord Jesus reign without a rival in all the powers of your soul.

SEPTEMBER 24.

On honoring the holy name of God.

CONSIDER, first, those words of the second commandment, (Exodus xx. 7.) "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take his name in vain." The utmost respect is here enforced towards the holy name of the Lord our God: and the heinous crimes of *blasphemy*—which directly insults the infinite majesty of God,—and of *perjury*—by which he is called to witness any falsehood—are strictly prohibited. Moreover, this commandment forbids all profane swearing and cursing, and all other irreverent use of the sacred name of God.

Consider, secondly, how on every occasion unhappy mortals swear by the holy name of God; often falsely, often unjustly, generally rashly; and thus continually expose themselves to the evident danger of that most enormous sin, of calling God to be witness to their lies! How often do they call upon him to execute the damnation, which every humor or passion of theirs pronounces against some or other of his creatures! How often, in their madness, do they pronounce the like sentence upon their own souls! How often is the sacred name of *God* brought in, even by the better sort, without any reason, to express every passion or emotion of their souls! Alas! what liberty is here taken by these worms of the earth, with the tremendous majesty of the Lord of heaven!

Consider, thirdly, that the great business of a christian is, to glorify the name of God, both by his tongue, and by his life. We must extol his mercies, and direct our words and conversation to promote his glory, and the edification of our neighbors. And we must live as become his children and his people. It is written concerning wicked livers, that "through them the name of God is blasphemed." But the lives of God's true servants are "the sweet odor of Christ, in every place," and cause others to glorify him by the efficacy of good example.

Conclude, in future, to have the holy name of God in the utmost veneration, and to detest the crime of many christians, who are more guilty far, of profaning it than even Turks or infidels.

SEPTEMBER 25.

On keeping holy the Lord's day.

CONSIDER, first, that the precept "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day," as to its substance and the obligation of dedicating, in a more particular manner, a competent portion of our days to the worship of our God, is indispensable. The particular day appointed by the Mosaic law was only *ceremonial*, and is now no longer of obligation. Sunday, the day on which were accomplished the great mysteries of our Lord's resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost by which the work of our Redemption, and the glorious promulgation of the new law was completed, was substituted for the Jewish Sabbath by the Church in the time of the apostles, and must be sanctified with equal care.

Consider, secondly, that on the Sunday and other days appointed to be kept holy, all *servile works* and profane employments are forbidden, as hinderances of God's worship on those days; though commendable, and even of obligation, at other times. How much more strictly prohibited are all such criminal diversions, as are lawful at no time; and all those works of darkness and of sin, by which men serve the devil, and which of course, are *servile* in the worst of senses? Let not then your rest on these days, be a rest of sloth, of luxury, or pride; but rather the rest of the soul from all sin, and the body from business and labor in order to attend more freely to the great concern of salvation.

Consider, thirdly, that all christians are obliged on these days to assist at the public worship of God, and particularly at the sacrifice of the mass, and in it to join with Jesus Christ our great high-priest, in adoration, praise, and thanksgiving to the divine Majesty; to lament their sins, and crave pardon through Christ's precious blood here offered up to God; to present, through him, their prayers for themselves and for the whole world, before "the throne of grace;" to receive, at least spiritually, the body and blood of Christ; to attend to the word of God, read devout books, and employ a good part of their time in these and such like spiritual exercises. Moreover, they must see that others under their charge do not neglect them.

Conclude to be diligent in all these means of sanctifying the Lord's day; and you will thus obtain his divine blessing.

SEPTEMBER 26.

Honor thy father and thy mother.

CONSIDER, first, that nothing can be more agreeable to nature, to reason, and religion, than this divine commandment, by which we are enjoined to honor our parents and all who have from God a power over us, in church or state. We see, in many instances, how much God takes to heart our strict observance of it, and how severely he punishes even in this life, the transgressors. In the old law, he ordered all who were notoriously guilty in this point, to be put to death without mercy; and he still frequently inflicts the most dreadful judgments upon the undutiful.

Consider, secondly, the admonitions of the Holy Ghost in sacred scripture, on this subject, (Eccles. iii.) "Honor thy father in work and word, and in all patience; that a blessing may come upon thee for him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end. The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children; but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation. Son, support the old age of thy father; and grieve him not in his life: and if his understanding fail, have patience with him; and despise him not when thou art in thy strength; and in the day of affliction thou shalt be remembered; and thy sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather." And again—"He that honoreth his father, shall have joy in his own children; and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard"—and "shall enjoy a long life," &c.

Consider, thirdly, on the other hand, the duty of parents to their children; and so, in proportion, of superiors to all under their charge. For their own eternal welfare, as well as that of their children or inferiors, greatly depends upon their conduct in this particular. They must take much more to heart their eternal salvation, than their temporal well-being, and carefully train them from their infancy in the fear and love of God. They must remove from them all the occasions of sin, and procure them all the helps they can, to establish them in solid christian piety. Alas! how many rather train up their children for hell, by inspiring them from their childhood with the maxims of a corrupt world!

Conclude, diligently to comply with your duty in your respective situation of life, and to examine yourself very strictly upon your relative obligations.

SEPTEMBER 27.

Thou shalt not kill.

CONSIDER, first, that not only all wilful murder, unjust shedding of blood, beating or doing any thing else to hasten another's or one's own death, is forbidden by this commandment; but all thoughts or desires of the death of any person, through malice or envy, or for some temporal interest or convenience; also all hatred and rancor of heart against any one living. For it is written, (1 John iii. 15.) "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Christians, look well to your selves, and be not here deluded.

Consider, secondly, what the Son of God says upon this subject, [Matt. v. 21, &c.] "You have heard that it was said to to them of old, 'Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, *RACA*"—a word expressing indignation or contempt—"shall be in danger of the council"—which is a higher and more severe tribunal: "And whosoever shall say, *thou fool*, shall be in danger of hell fire." Hence, we must not only restrain our hand from killing, but our heart from entertaining the passion of anger, and the desire of revenge; and refrain from breaking out into reproachful language and provocations, which excite our neighbor also to passion.

Consider, thirdly, how severely the crime of anger and revenge is reprov'd in the Old Testament, [Eccles. xxviii.] "He that seeketh to revenge himself, shall find vengeance from the Lord; and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. He hath no mercy on a man like himself; and doth he entreat for his own sins? He that is but flesh, nourisheth anger; and doth he ask forgiveness of God? Forgive thy neighbor, if he have hurt thee; and then shall thy sins be forgiven to thee, when thou prayest. Remember thy last things, and let enmity cease. Refrain from strife, and thou shalt diminish thy sins."

Conclude to banish far from your soul, even every thought that has any tendency to malice or revenge; and learn rather to suffer injuries with patience, than offend your God.

SEPTEMBER 28.

On spiritual murder.

CONSIDER, first, that there is another kind of murder, besides that which destroys the body; namely, the murdering of the soul, by bringing upon it the death of sin. A crime most heinous in the sight of God; but very common among christians. Of this kind of murder the devil gave the first example; by "whose envy death came into the world," [Wisd. ii. 24.] and "who was a murderer from the beginning," [John viii. 44.] by drawing man into deadly sin.

Consider, secondly, that all those are guilty of this kind of murder, who entice others to evil by word or work, dress or comportment;—all who provoke their neighbors to sin, or teach them the evil they knew not before; all who engage them in dangerous diversions and conversations, or encourage what is criminal by their own wicked example. All these incur the dreadful guilt of spiritual murder, as often as they are the occasion of mortal sin; and, as much as lies in them, defeat the merciful design of our good God in the incarnation of his beloved Son—the salvation of the souls of men.

Consider, thirdly, that the murder of the body is certainly a most heinous sin, and one of the greatest that can be committed between man and man; it "cries to heaven for vengeance." But then it reaches only the body, which must at all events speedily perish: it does not touch the immortal; it does not extend to eternity. But spiritual murder kills the soul, by depriving it of the grace of God, which is its true life; it brings upon it a second and everlasting death; it plunges both soul and body into the flames of hell. "Wo" then "to that man by whom scandal cometh."

Conclude to look well to yourself, that you may never have any share in this enormous guilt; or, without repentance, you will bring upon your own head a multiplied damnation.

SEPTEMBER 29.

On Michaelmas-Day.

CONSIDER, first, that the devotion of this festival, instituted by the church in honor of St. Michael, and of all the orders of blessed spirits, is, first, to join with all the heavenly host in giving glory, praise, and thanksgiving to God, who created these angelic spirits to glorify him, and has inspired them all with an unspeakable love for us, and sent them to minister for us, that we may "receive the inheritance of salvation," [Heb.

i. 14.] Second, to rejoice in their eternal happiness: third, to associate ourselves with them, to fight the battles of the Lord, against the devil and his rebel angels.

Consider, secondly, that these blessed spirits, from the first moment of their creation, turned towards their great Creator; by adoration and love, and dedicated themselves eternally to him. We were made for the same end as they were, that is, to glorify God; and, like them, were strictly obliged to turn to our Creator, as soon as we were capable of knowing him. But have we not rather, like Lucifer and his associates, turned away from God, from the first instant of our reason? The good angels are ever attentive to procure, not their own, but His glory. Do we imitate them? If so, at all times and in all places we shall like them enjoy a kind of heaven within us, even upon earth.

Consider, thirdly, that if we wish to be for ever united with the angels, we must be converted from the corruption of pride, which cast the devil out of heaven; and "become as little children," by innocence and humility: for Satan is "the king over all the children of pride," [Job xli.] We must not give or take *scandal* against our own souls: we must cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," [2 Cor. vii. 1.] For "nothing that is defiled shall enter into heaven," where the angels dwell for ever, [Rev. xxi. 27.]

Conclude, so to honor St. Michael and all the good angels, as to imitate their fidelity to their God.

SEPTEMBER 30.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

CONSIDER, first, that by this commandment is forbidden, in the first place, the heinous crime of adultery, which is a flagrant violation of all the rights of matrimony. Moreover, it condemns and prohibits, under the name of adultery, (without specifying all the shameful sins of lust) every kind of uncleanness, committed by or with married persons or single, and much more all unnatural sins of lust, committed upon one's self, or with any other; also all abuses of the marriage-bed, by any liberties contrary to the sanctity of matrimony, or to the end of its institution. They are all odious and abominable in the sight of God, who cannot endure impurity.

Consider, secondly, that our Lord condemns even every wanton glance of the eye, every impure inclination of the heart, [Matt. v.] If then we would be truly chaste, as the divine law commands, we must, with holy Job, restrain our

eyes, our thoughts, and imaginations, lest death should enter into our souls by these inlets. "I made a covenant," saith he, "with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin," [Job xxxi.] lest "God above should have no part in me." By this commandment also are forbidden—all loose discourse, all unchaste words and songs, which spread every where a dreadful contagion.

Consider, thirdly, how much more this commandment condemns and forbids all carnal liberties, all wanton play, all indecent touches; immodest kisses, and the like; which tend to defile both soul and body with lust. Christians, know that the word of God [Gal. v. 19. and Ephes. v. 3, 4, &c.,] absolutely excludes all who are guilty of these disorders, from the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

Conclude, to keep your soul and body clean from the defilements of lust; and resolutely avoid all the occasions, however dear to you, of this mortal evil.

OCTOBER 1.

Thou shalt not steal.

CONSIDER, first, that by this commandment God forbids all wrong to our neighbor,—in his goods, rights, or worldly possessions, whether by open violence or by fraud; by stealing or over-reaching; by cheating in buying or in selling, or in any other bargain; by keeping from him what is his, or not giving him his dues, or not paying just debts; by any extortion whatever, or any usury in the loan of money or other things; or by putting him to unjust charges, or by spoiling or damaging what belongs to him. Moreover, in all these cases the injustice is condemned also by that great principle of morality and of nature, which forbids us to do unto others what we would not have done to ourselves.

Consider, secondly, that all injustice is attended with the strictest obligation of restoring, or of repairing to the full, the loss or damage thus caused. Christians, be not too easy in persuading yourselves you have it not in your power to make restitution: you cannot deceive the all-seeing eye of him who has declared, that "the unjust shall never possess his kingdom," [1 Cor. vi. 9.] He clearly discerns how much you might do, if you would but retrench all superfluities in your expenses, and would seriously take to heart this necessary duty of satisfying justice in the first place, and would use all possible industry in this cause.

Consider, thirdly, that all such injustices are particularly hateful to Almighty God, as tend to oppress the poor by usu-

ry or extortion, or by making a handle of their necessity to raise to them the price of the things they want; or by defrauding them of their hire, or otherwise taking or keeping from them that which is their due. How heinous are these crimes in the eyes of Him who is "the father of the poor!" They are like murder in his sight. That gold which is amassed by thus robbing the poor will moulder, and consume both the master and his riches.

Conclude, strictly to examine yourself upon all the branches of injustice; and avoid it with the utmost care.

OCTOBER 2.

On our guardian Angels.

CONSIDER, first, the testimony of the word of God, with relation to our guardian angels. "He hath given his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways: in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone," [Matt. xviii.] Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven," [Heb. i.] "Are they not all ministering spirits sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation." [See also Exodus xxiii.] Christians, what an honor, to have such guardians as these to protect and aid us in the service of our God!

Consider, secondly, the excess of the divine goodness and love for us, expressed in the commission given to his angels, "to keep us in all our ways." Who are we; and what is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him, and hast even commanded thy own angels, those sublime spirits—so happy—so closely connected with thyself, to watch over him and preserve him from all evil! O wonderful condescension of thy infinite charity!

Consider, thirdly, what devotion and what confidence the thought that "God has given his angels a charge over us to keep us in all our ways," ought to inspire. "In God," says St. Bernard, "let us affectionately love his angels, that are to be one day joint heirs with us, but in the mean time are appointed by our Father, and are set over us as tutors and governors. What have we to fear under such guardians as these? They can neither be overcome nor deceived; much less can they deceive us. They are faithful; they are wise; they are powerful; of what are we afraid? Let us but follow them, let us always keep close to them; and we shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven."

Conclude, under all your temptations and afflictions, to in-

voke with confidence your good angel; and he will powerfully assist you.

OCTOBER 3.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

CONSIDER, first, that by this commandment all false testimony, given in open court or before a magistrate against any one; and much more, perjury or false swearing, is forbidden: also all private slanders, detraction and lies: likewise all tale-bearing, which promotes misunderstanding and quarrels between neighbors; an evil so odious in the sight of God, that the wise man assures us, [Prov. vi. 16.] "his soul detests it." All these crimes are here condemned, and are contrary to the eternal and natural law written in the heart of man; and strictly oblige to restitution or satisfaction.

Consider, secondly, how grievous is the prevailing evil of detraction. At every blow, says St. Francis of Sales, it gives three mortal wounds; first, to the soul of the detractor; second, to the reputation of the person detracted; and third, to the consciences of those who are delighted with hearing the detraction, and thus partake in the guilt, and much more if they publish it to others. The detractor himself is like a thief or a robber, who takes away his neighbor's character: yes, he is so much worse than a robber, as a person's character or good name is more valuable to him than his worldly substance; which also is endangered when the character is once lost. Ah! that christians were well aware of this.

Consider, thirdly, that detraction may be committed, and the obligation of restoring one's neighbor's good name incurred, by publishing without necessity, even his real crimes or defects, in circumstances when his character is hurt. In this we do not sin only against *charity*, by which we are obliged to love our neighbour as ourselves; but also against *justice*, by violating his right to a good name, as long as he has not forfeited it by any public crime.

Conclude carefully to examine yourself upon the sins against this commandment, and to be very tender of your neighbor's reputation in future.

OCTOBER 4.

On rash judgment.

CONSIDER, first, that by the eighth commandment rash judgment also is prohibited. "Judge not," saith our Lord, [Luke vi. 37.] "and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Why dost thou judge thy brother," saith St. Paul, [Rom. xiv. 10.] "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; and every one of us shall render an account to God for himself. Let us not therefore, judge one another any more. There is one lawgiver and judge, that is able to destroy and deliver: but who art thou that judgeth thy neighbor," [James iv.]

Consider, secondly, that we are guilty of the highest injustice, in passing sentence upon our neighbor unheard, and without sufficient knowledge of his guilt; and this without any legal authority over him, or observing any order of justice in his regard. Moreover, deliberate rash judgment destroys charity, the property of which is to "think no evil," [1 Cor. xiii.] and to overlook even real defects, when duty does not oblige us to correct them. Rash judgment likewise destroys humility, by preferring one's self, in one's own breast, before the person thus condemned. In a word, it usurps the divine prerogative; since all *judgment* belongs to God.

Consider, thirdly, that in many persons rash judgment springs from pride, and from their having too good an opinion of themselves: in others, from ill-will, hatred, and envy, which puts the worst construction on what the parties say or do, and condemns their intentions, even in their best actions. Others again judge ill of their neighbors, because they themselves are wicked. Others in a word, from the conceit they have of their own wit, pass sentence upon every one, without perceiving the injustice of their conduct. The general remedy for all rash judgment is—to turn our eye always upon our own faults, and to condemn ourselves.

Conclude to study well the practice of charity and humility, as the sovereign means to subdue this pernicious evil.

OCTOBER 4.

On avoiding all lies.

CONSIDER, first, that our blessed Saviour tells us, [John viii. 44.] that "the devil is a liar, and the father of lies," and that "all liars shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death," [Apocal.]

And the Holy Ghost assures us by the mouth of the wise man, [Prov. vi. 16.] that "the Lord hateth a lying tongue," and [Ch. xii. 22.] that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord;" [Ch. xiii. 5.] that "the just shalt hate a lying word;" [Wisd. i. 11.] that "the mouth that lieth killeth the soul;" and [Eccles. xx. 17.] that even "a thief is better than a man that is always lying; but that both of them shall inherit destruction."

Consider, secondly, that every known untruth is essentially evil, by reason of its opposition to the God of Truth. He is Truth itself; and, therefore cannot but hate falsehood and deceit. Some lies indeed are more heinous than others; either because they directly strike at revealed truths, or tend to vilify religion; or because of the injury done to our neighbor, in soul or body, goods or good name; and these are all mortal sins. But there are no lies whatsoever, not even those told in jest or for excuse, which are not sinful; and therefore ought not to be committed, even to save the whole world; because "evil is not to be done that good may come of it."

Consider, thirdly, that it is a dangerous thing for any christian to make light of telling a lie of vanity or excuse; and still more so, to contract a habit of it, upon a notion that if one can escape hell, it matters not how much we otherwise offend God. For how can such a habit be reconciled with the love of God, above all things? Or how can there be any security, for one who treats his God in this contemptuous manner? Such christians will certainly find, to their cost, that "God is not to be mocked."

Conclude never to tell a known lie upon any account whatever, much less, to avoid a little anger or confusion.

OCTOBER 6.

Thou shalt not covet, &c.

CONSIDER, first, that riches and carnal pleasures are the two great idols to which men sacrifice their hearts and affections; the young, by the concupiscence of the flesh; the old, by the concupiscence of the eyes: and thus both old and young for the most part, are drawn away from the love and service of God, and made slaves to Satan. Ah, christians! never think yourselves innocent, though you keep your hands from stealth, and your bodies from adultery or fornication, if you do not at the same time keep your eyes and your hearts from *coveting*. As long as your affections are criminal, you cannot be innocent.

Consider, secondly, that by this precept, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," we are commanded to set a guard

upon our thoughts, upon our hearts, upon our eyes, and all our other senses,—the avenues through which sin enters into the soul. How much more are christians bound to flee all such occasions as expose them to a more immediate danger of lewd thoughts and desires; as a great part of modern comedies, masquerades, and the like diversions are known to do, especially in regard of the younger sort? Alas! how many are in love with these dangerous amusements,—so near akin to the pomps of Satan, which we all renounced at baptism!

Consider, thirdly, the necessity of restraining all *unjust* desires, which tend either to deprive our neighbor of what in justice belongs to him, or to withhold from him what is his right; also all wishes of his death, that we may succeed to his possessions; and all desires of public or private calamities, for one's particular advantage. But then, we must "lay the axe to the root" of covetousness, which is the love of money. For "they that would become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition," [1 Tim. vi.]

Conclude to keep inviolable these and all the other divine commandments:—thus they will be to you the gate both to present, and to future happiness.

OCTOBER 7.

On the precepts of the Church.

CONSIDER, first, that all christians are under a strict obligation of keeping the precepts of the church, as well as the divine commandments, because the law of God enjoins us so to do. The commandment "Honor thy father and mother," includes our spiritual parents, no less than our parents according to the flesh; namely, the pastors of the Church of Christ. To these Christ our Lord has said, [Luke x. 16.] "He that hear-eth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." To these he has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with the power of binding and loosing," [Matth. xvi. 19. xviii. 18.] To these he has given the charge of our souls; and therefore, the apostle calls upon us [Heb. xiii.] not only to follow their faith, [verse 7.] but also to obey them, and submit ourselves to them, [verse 17.]

Consider, secondly, that the precepts of the church determine the particular days which, indefinitely, the law of God and of nature requires us to consecrate to the divine worship. The divine law calls upon us to offer adoration, praise and sacrifice to our God: the precepts of the church prescribe, for

this end, the frequenting of the great sacrifice of the death of Christ, offered in the holy mass. The law of God obliges us to do penance for our sins; the church appoints the times for this penitential exercise; lest, if we were left to ourselves, we should entirely neglect it. The law of Christ ordains the confession of our sins, and the worthy reception of the holy communion: the church enjoins yearly confession, and not to neglect the receiving of the blessed eucharist, at least at the Easter term. Wherefore, in religiously complying with these church laws, we obey in effect the law of God.

Consider, thirdly, the unhappy case of all such christians as despise these precepts of the church of Christ. Alas! they despise in effect both Christ and his Father, [Luke x. 16.] Therefore, the wilful transgression of any of the ordinances is certainly criminal in the sight of God; how much more, the contempt of them? And those undutiful children who live in a habitual disobedience to God and his church, with regard to festivals, fasting, abstinence, and the frequentations of the sacraments deserve not the name of *children*, but rather that of heathens and unbelievers, (Matt. xviii. 17.)

Conclude then, to observe religiously the laws and ordinances of the Church of God; and see they be religiously observed by all under your care.

OCTOBER 8.

On the vice of pride.

CONSIDER, first, that pride is defined an inordinate love, conceit or desire of self-excellence. It is the mother of all vices, especially of ambition, presumption, and vain glory; from which it differs only in this. that ambition affects to *excel* in the way of honor, dignity, and power; presumption seeks to become eminent by rash enterprises founded upon a vain notion of our own strength or abilities; and vain glory pretends to *excellence*, by the praise, esteem, or notice of others: but pride looks chiefly at herself, and sets up for her idol, her own proper *self-excellence*.

Consider, secondly, that we may be guilty of this worst of vices, First, by attributing to ourselves, and not to God, the good things we derive from Him, either of nature, or of grace. Second, by ascribing at least to our own merits what we have received from God, and not giving him the whole glory. Third, by imagining ourselves possessed of advantages which we have not, and being elated with this idea of our own *excellence*. Fourth, by highly valuing ourselves for *real* qualifications, and despising others who have not the like accomplish-

ments, or envying them when they have. Self-excellence belongs to God alone, which pride impiously arrogates to itself. In punishment of their arrogance the proud often fall into the most shameful vices, and are abandoned by God to a reprobate sense.

Consider, thirdly, that pride is a mortal sin, not only when a man directly incurs the guilt of any of those four kinds mentioned by St. Gregory, through his own deliberate judgment or will: at least as often as the matter is of moment; but also when he incurs the guilt indirectly or virtually, by conducting himself in such a manner as if he judged himself, or desired others should judge him to have any excellency or perfection, from himself and not from God. Also when the conceit we have of ourselves is joined with a great irreverence to God, or contempt of our neighbor; or when it causes us to disobey the divine law, or the commands of lawful superiors.

Conclude carefully to examine yourself upon this capital vice: it is a subtle evil, and imposes upon thousands.

OCTOBER 9.

On the malignity of pride.

CONSIDER, first, that pride corrupts the very vitals of the soul, and leaves nothing sound in it. It is a rottenness at the heart which spoils the fairest plants that grow on this infected soil. The fruits of the good works of the proud, resemble those said to grow on the banks of the lake of Sodom, fair to the eye but rotten within. The virtues are blasted, because the root of them is unsound. They have no foundation within them for any solid good; because they want humility: for "God resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble."

Consider, secondly, the malignant fruits of pride; it sets all the other passions at work, to be subservient to its lawless desires of *self-excellence*;—*covetousness*, in procuring, right or wrong, those riches which may furnish the means of *excelling*; and—also *prodigality*, in expending them. Anger, hatred, and revenge are let loose against all that stand in the way of its unjust pretensions. Inferiors are oppressed and treated with *contempt*; equals are envied; superiors are slighted and disobeyed. Quarrels, murders, and rebellions, heresies and blasphemies are frequently the offspring of pride; and the most infamous crimes, into which the proud often fall in punishment of their arrogance.

Consider, thirdly, that God is the Being of all beings: all excellence and all glory is his. To pretend therefore to any excellence as our own property, or to appropriate to ourselves,

or take a pride in the gifts and graces of God, is a sacrilegious robbery of what belongs to him alone. For this reason "every proud man is an abomination to the Lord," (Prov. xvi. 5.) His pride is a lie, and makes him resemble the father of lies, in pretending to be like to the Most High who alone is *self-excellent*; and therefore, it is most hateful to the eternal truth.

Conclude, "never to suffer pride to reign in your mind, nor in your words: for, from it, all perdition took its beginning." (Tob. iv. 14.)

OCTOBER 10.

Remedies against pride.

CONSIDER, first, that the most necessary prescription against pride is, frequently to review the state of our soul, and to examine the secret springs which set all our passions in motion. Thus we shall be sensible, that it is an evil deeply rooted in our corrupt nature; an enemy so much the more dangerous, as he lies in ambush in the inmost recesses of the soul. When once we are perfectly aware of all his stratagems, we shall keep a strict guard over ourselves, in order to prevent surprise, and by constant watchfulness and humble prayer, frustrate his utmost efforts to undo us.

Consider, secondly, that all our pretensions to excellence, all our groundless self-conceit, which is so apt to turn our heads upon real or imaginary advantages, is quickly dispelled by the light of the knowledge of God, acquired by meditation and mental prayer. This convinces the soul, that all that is not God, is a mere nothing. All human greatness, all *height and depth*, and every created object dwindles into nothing in his presence. "Heaven and earth flee away from before his face, and no place is found for them," (Apoc. xx. 11.) how much less can *dust* and *ashes* glory in his sight!

Consider, thirdly, that by serious meditation we are made sensible what poor creatures indeed we are; how mean is our extraction; how early we were stained with sin; how frightfully we are engulfed in darkness, ignorance and errors; exposed daily to numberless dangers; capable of all that is wicked, but quite incapable of ourselves, of any good: certain of death (though we know not when, nor where, nor how)—which will give these bodies to the worms, and transmit our souls to judgment; and dreadfully uncertain as to the issue of that great trial, and our eternal lot. Alas! with these reflections can any one be proud?

Conclude to spare no pains to acquire those two most necessary branches of christian science—the true knowledge of God,

and the true knowledge of yourself. These must be learned by meditation and prayer.

OCTOBER 11.

Other prescriptions against pride.

CONSIDER, first, that for the subduing of pride it may also be of service frequently to reflect how vain and empty those things generally are, of which men are apt to be proud; for instance, worldly honor, riches, beauty and the like, which make the possessors not one whit the better in the sight of God, but rather, if they are proud of them, render them odious and contemptible, both to God and man. For every one hates and despises pride in another, however he may cherish it in himself. And as to the gifts of grace or other talents received from God, it is still more criminal to be proud of them.

Consider, secondly, with regard to mortal sin in general, and pride in particular, that the deformity and malignity of its guilt in the soul, and its eternal punishment hereafter, are most humbling reflections. For surely a soul turned away from God by mortal sin, and eternally banished from him; condemned to the worm that never dies, and to the fire that is never extinguished, in the dungeons of hell, can have nothing to be proud of! Mortal sin and hell, those two most dreadful of all evils, leave no room for pride.

Consider, thirdly, who is "the king over all the children of pride?" Whose standard do they all join, in opposition to the God that made heaven and earth? Alas! they all combine with Satan, their mortal enemy! He is already condemned to hell; and what can they expect? Adam, by following his example, has entailed all kinds of miseries upon his posterity; and, to remedy them, the Son of God came down from heaven, humbling himself even to the death of the cross, to oppose the standard of his humility to the standard of the fiend of pride. Ah! let these most pressing motives excite us to detest our pride: let us at length begin, like our blessed Saviour "to be meek and humble of heart."

Conclude henceforward to renounce the king of pride, and take up the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ by meekness and humility.

OCTOBER 12.

On vain glory.

CONSIDER, first, that vain glory was in a particular manner the vice of the Scribes and Pharisees, who did all their works that they might be honored and esteemed by men; and therefore, their alms, their fastings, their prayers and other apparent good works availed them nothing in the sight of God; because vain glory, the offspring of pride, corrupted them all, and at the very time they were esteemed as saints by the world, rendered them abominable in the eyes of God. Christians, beware of this pernicious, but very common evil, and arm yourselves against it by earnest prayer.

Consider, secondly, that vain glory amounts to the guilt of mortal sin, whenever a person directs his intention in such manner to the glory of man, as to make it the final object even of his works of virtue, and to attain which, he does not hesitate to offend his God. In like manner, it is mortal when a person commits a mortal sin for the sake of vain glory, by swearing, quarreling, taking revenge, or the like. Also, when a person exposes himself to the danger of occasioning some considerable detriment, corporal or spiritual, to himself or others, by refusing to seek or admit of any assistance or advice, for fear of being thought less skillful or less knowing. In a word, vain glory is a mortal sin, whenever we glory in the gifts and graces of God, as if they were our own property, and we had not received them from Almighty God.

Consider, thirdly, that vain glory is the parent of many other vices—first, of *disobedience*, in despising the ordinances of lawful superiors, for the love of worldly honor or esteem: second, *boasting*, or exalting one's self, one's own talents or performances; and the odious habit of self-commendation, so common to the proud and vain-glorious: third, *hypocrisy*, in making a show of godliness to gain the esteem of men: fourth, *contention*, wrangling and brawling, to maintain one's own opinion right or wrong, or to defend what he has said or done: fifth, in a word, *obstinacy* in error, rather than acknowledge one's mistake, or seem to be overcome. And what are all heresies and schisms, but a compound of these evils, and consequently the result of vain glory?

Conclude absolutely to renounce this dangerous vice; and stifle it in its birth by acts of profound humility.

OCTOBER 13.

Prescriptions against vain glory.

CONSIDER, first, how truly vain, how fleeting, how inconstant is all human glory: it is like a puff of wind, which passes in a moment; it adds nothing to our merit in the sight of God, the just—the true eternal judge of all merit. “What is man the better,” says the FOLLOWING OF CHRIST, (lib. iii. cap. 50.) “for being reputed greater by men? One deceitful man deceives another: the blind deceives the blind, the weak the weak, whilst he extols him or rather doth confound him by the self-conviction of his own guilt.”

Consider, secondly, with the humble St. Francis, that what each one is in the sight of God, that he is, and no more. Listen again to the FOLLOWING OF CHRIST, (ibid. cap. 14.) “What is all flesh in thy sight, O Lord? How can *he* be puffed up with the vain talk of men, whose heart is truly subject unto God? *He* will never suffer himself to be moved with the tongues of them that praise him, who hath established his confidence in God. For behold, they that talk of him are all nothing, for they shall pass away with the sound of their words: but ‘the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever,’ ” (Ps. cxvi.)

Consider, thirdly, that this passion for glory is also unjust and impious, because it pretends to appropriate to itself what belongs to God alone. “What hast thou,” saith the apostle, “that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. iv. 7.) It is also pernicious; it poisons the best of our actions, and makes us liable to eternal punishment, for those very works, for which we might otherwise expect an eternal crown. “God knoweth our hearts,” saith our Lord, (Luke xvi.) “for that which is high to men is an abomination before God.”

Conclude always to seek the glory of God by purity of intention, in all your words and actions; and God will be your “reward exceeding great.”

OCTOBER 14.

On covetousness.

CONSIDER, first, that in holy scripture covetousness is termed “the serving of idols,” and the covetous man is declared “an idolater,” (Eph. v. 5. Colos. iii. 5.) because he worships and loves his money more than God; and he “serves the creature rather than the Creator,” (Rom. i. 25.) The avaricious man is ever ready to transgress the divine commandments,

rather than forego his worldly interest, to which he sacrifices his soul and all things; and for the sake of which he hardens his heart against the cries of the poor. Ah! "there is not a more wicked thing than" for a man "to love money; such a one setteth even his own soul to sale," (Eccles. x. 10.)

Consider, secondly, that the vice of covetousness is the mother of thefts and robberies, of fraud and deceit, of oppression of the poor, usury and extortion, and of all kinds of injustice. It is the cause of bribery and corruption, and of all its consequences. It has often brought forth heresy and schism, (1 Tim. vi. 10.) and with them a deluge of other crimes: it has pillaged and destroyed churches, hospitals, and asylums of religion, and invaded and carried off the patrimony of the poor: it even betrayed and sold the Son of God!

Consider, thirdly, that covetousness produces many other sad effects in the soul of man, even when it does not hurry him into the excesses specified above, and in the eyes of the world appears innocent. For if a person sets his affection too much upon riches or worldly possessions, and eagerly pursues after money; though he may not covet the goods of his neighbor, he quickly loses all relish for heavenly things, all true sense of devotion: he is solicitous for the things of the world: he loses that confidence he ought to have in divine providence: he neglects religious duties: he does not give alms according to his circumstances, and is constantly in danger of transgressing the law of God.

Conclude to be upon your guard against this pernicious vice. Deceive not yourself, as many do, by the plea of necessity.

OCTOBER 15.

Prescriptions against covetousness.

CONSIDER, first, that holy scripture, while it pronounces the most dreadful woes against the covetous, promises eternal blessings to them that "cast away covetousness," (Isa. xxxiii.) It recommends the remembrance of death, and of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, as a powerful remedy against this vice. The possession of riches is but a dream, and when the rich shall "have slept out their" short "sleep, they" shall "find nothing in their hands," (Psalms lxxv.) Let this suffice to give us a thorough contempt for earthly riches.

Consider, secondly, that these riches, so earnestly coveted by the slaves of the world, are not capable of making the possessors happy, or of satisfying the heart, even for the short term of their actual enjoyment. "A covetous man," saith

Solomon, (Eccles. v. 9.) "shall not be satisfied with money: and he that loveth riches shall reap no fruit from them." This wisest of men had learned by his own experience, that worldly wealth, instead of affording true contentment and peace of mind, is generally attended with nothing but "vanity and vexation of spirit," (Eccles. ii. 11.)

Consider, thirdly, that riches are truly *deceitful*, (Matthew xiii.) because they promise a happiness which they cannot give; they are *thorns*, (ibid.) that wound and gore the soul; and they expose the possessors to many dreadful dangers of losing their souls for ever; because it is hard to possess them, and not to abuse them, or a least set the heart too much upon them: witness that terrible sentence, (Matt. xix. 24.) "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." For "the men of riches have their consolation" here, (Luke vi. 24.)

Conclude, if you are rich, to dread the dangers which surround you; and arm yourself against them by poverty of spirit and true humility: you have no other security for your soul.

OCTOBER 16.

On the vice of impurity.

CONSIDER, first, that the "lust of the flesh" is another raging plague, which has spread itself over the whole earth. It once brought down from heaven the waters of the deluge, and another time consumed with fire and brimstone, whole cities with their inhabitants: and it daily provokes the vengeance of heaven, executed by visible or invisible judgments upon thousands cast down head-long, in the midst of their sinful course, into the bottomless pit. The word of God by a strong figurative expression says, (Gen. vi.) the wickedness of men in this line was so odious in his sight, that "he was grieved with it to the heart," and even "repented that he had made them."

Consider, secondly, that what makes lust so hateful in the sight of God, is its particular opposition to his purity and sanctity. It defiles in a most shameful and beastly manner, that *temple* which he has sanctified for himself; more especially in regard of christians, whose bodies and souls have both been consecrated to him in their baptism, to be his *temple*. First, "know you not that you are the temple of God," saith St. Paul, speaking to all christians, (1 Cor. iii.) "and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him will God destroy."

Consider, thirdly, that the habit of impurity which often is brought on by one single act, by a repitition of the crime turns

into a second nature infinitely hard to overcome. Hence ensue, according to St. Gregory—a blindness and hardness of heart; thoughtlessness and insensibility with regard to the judgments of God, and the truth of eternity; inconstancy with regard to all good; and aversion from God and his service, and a perpetual love and seeking of one's self; a strong attachment to this world, and horror or despair with regard to the world to come. Such is the unhappy offspring of lust.

Conclude to flee from all impurity more than death, and from all bad company and other dangerous occasions, more than from the plague.

OCTOBER 17.

Prescriptions against impurity.

CONSIDER, first, that the most necessary of all precautions against impurity, is the keeping at a distance from the danger; especially from all such persons as are a temptation to us; also from the reading of loose or idle books; for instance, romances, plays, and the like; all intemperance in eating and drinking, unguarded curiosity, and an idle dissipated life. For "he that loves the danger, shall perish in it," (Eccles. iii. 27.)

Consider, thirdly, that the *flight* of the occasions will not alone suffice to gain the victory over this vice, without frequent conflicts: for whither shall we flee where the flesh and the devil will not follow? We must also be diligent in the use of fervent prayer;—frequent the sacraments; daily read and meditate on divine truths; often have recourse to the precious blood of Christ by a tender devotion to his sacred passion and death; and earnestly implore the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and of all the holy angels and saints: and especially at the beginning of temptations, we must make a vigorous resistance, and call upon God to assist us with his grace to overcome them.

Consider, thirdly, that we must have a lively faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, with an humble diffidence of our own strength; for we are weakness and frailty itself, unless supported by Him. Above all things, the fear and love of God must be our constant shield against every assault:—the fear of his judgments, and the dreadful punishments prepared for lust; the love of the divine goodness and perfections, to move us to an abhorrence of the outrage directed against Him.

Conclude manfully to withstand the allurements of vice by the help of daily meditation and the fear and love of God; and HE will give you the victory.

OCTOBER 18.

On the virtue of chastity.

CONSIDER, first, that chastity is the lilly of virtues, the bright ornament of the soul: the profession and practice of which by so many thousands, is one of the greatest evidences of the truth and excellency of the christian religion, and of the wonderful grace which it communicates to its followers. It makes us, even in this mortal flesh, resemble the angels, (Matthew xxii. 30.) and entitles us to the special favor of Jesus Christ, the lover and the model of purity, and the spouse of pure souls. These shall "sing before his throne as it were a new canticle," which none of the rest of the blessed can sing, (Apoc. xiv. 3.)

Consider, secondly, what the apostle says of this virtue, (1 Thess. iv. 3, 7.) "This is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from fornication,"—and all uncleanness;—"for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness." This virtue of *holiness* or *chastity*, by the law of God, and the sanctity of the christian calling, is for all—married as well as unmarried. The married must be *chaste*, by refraining from every thought, word, or action, not referred to the holy ends for which matrimony was instituted. The unmarried must renounce absolutely all carnal pleasures, and all the irregular motions or impressions of lust, whether in body or mind.

Consider, thirdly, that besides the necessity of fervent prayer, (for "no one can be continent except God give it," (Wisdom viii. 21.) mortification and humility are also necessary to preserve this virtue. By mortification the *flesh* is brought under subjection to the spirit; and by humility the spirit is subjected to God. But when the *flesh* is unmortified, it grows headstrong and unruly; and when the spirit is proud, it is justly abandoned by God to the most shameful passions; against which humility alone must secure us.

Conclude to labor with all your power to acquire this precious jewel of purity and chastity; and harbor not its mortal enemies, intemperance and pride.

OCTOBER 19.

On the vice of anger.

CONSIDER, first, that anger, in the sense in which it is numbered among the capital sins, is "an inordinate love or desire of revenge." It is contrary to justice, whenever the person

with whom we are angry, has not deserved the punishment which we desire to inflict; or though he has deserved it, if we observe not the order of justice, but act both as executioners and judges in our own cause; which is never lawful. It is contrary to fraternal charity when, let the cause be ever so just, we prosecute or punish the offender out of hatred or ill-will, rather than the love of justice. In these cases our anger is contrary to justice or charity, and highly criminal.

Consider, secondly, that anger and passion directly destroy all meekness and, consequently, humility, its inseparable companion; for anger generally springs from pride and self-love: it is a stranger to *mercy*, according to that of Solomon [Prov. xxvii. 4.] "Anger hath no mercy:" it breaks peace both with God and our neighbor, and is the mortal enemy of patience and *long-suffering*; for it will suffer nothing; much less will it admit of the "renouncing of our own will," or submit to "take up the cross"—virtues recommended by Jesus as the tests of his disciples.

Consider, thirdly, what oaths, curses, and blasphemies; what affronts and injuries; what quarrels and reproaches; yea, sometimes bloodshed and murder too; what hatred and malice usually attend this passion of anger, besides the scandal given to our neighbor's soul; as one fire is apt to enkindle another: not to speak of many other sad effects of this vice, which is frequently pernicious to the health of the body, as well as that of the soul, and is insupportable to all about us.

Conclude to "render to no man evil for evil"—and, "if it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good," [Rom. xii. 17, &c.]

OCTOBER 20.

Remedies against the vice of anger.

CONSIDER, first, that as long as we refuse to take upon us the yoke of Jesus Christ, by denying ourselves and learning of him "to be meek and humble of heart," we belong not to him; for we have not his spirit. And therefore he will declare to us, "I know you not; depart from me; ye workers of iniquity!" It is then absolutely necessary, for all who wish to be acknowledged his true disciples, to subdue the vice of anger, the mortal enemy to this spirit of meekness and humility. To this end we must watch and pray, and manfully resist all its assaults.

Consider, secondly, how these three prescriptions are to be complied with. First, we must *watch*; by forecasting in the

morning for instance, the occasions we may likely meet with in the day, in order to arm ourselves against them. Secondly, we must *pray* most earnestly for the victory, which God alone can give. And, thirdly, we must *fight*, by resisting the first motions of our passion; and by turning away from the temptation and leaving the company; or at least by keeping silence till the commotion is over, or answering nothing but with meekness and condescension.

Consider, thirdly, that in order to overcome our passion, we must learn also, to despise and humble ourselves; for anger usually proceeds from an unhappy pride, which makes us impatient of contradiction or control. Alas, if we did but know ourselves, and what we have deserved by our manifold and grievous offences against God, we should not seek to revenge every slight offence of our neighbor against us.

Conclude resolutely to withstand this unhappy passion; otherwise it will fill you with sin, and will not suffer either peace or grace to reside in your soul.

OCTOBER 21.

On the vice of intemperance.

CONSIDER, first, that intemperance or excess in eating or drinking, is a mortal sin, whenever it exposes a person to the danger of considerable prejudice, either in soul or body, health or reason; or when it shortens his days, like a slow poison, as frequently happens, though its effects are not immediately perceived: and, in general, when for pleasure in eating or drinking, a person does not hesitate to transgress the commandments of God or of the Church, or otherwise makes the gratification of his sensual appetite in a manner the study and occupation of his life. Of these the apostle pronounces, with tears, that "their God is their belly;"—that they "are enemies of the cross of Christ," and that their "end is destruction," [Phil. iii.]

Consider, secondly, the unhappy effects of intemperance. It often robs men of their reason, destroys their health, brings upon them a variety of diseases; it shortens their lives, consumes their substance, disturbs the peace of their families, withdraws from their wives and children their necessary subsistence, gives scandal and bad example to neighbors, foment the passions, shuts the gate against the grace of God and all good, and opens it to all evil. In a word, gluttons shall hereafter hunger and thirst for all eternity, and never obtain the smallest refreshment, [Luke xvi.]

Consider, thirdly, how the word of God condemns this evil.

“Wine and women make wise men fall away,” [Eccles. xix. 2.] “Woe to you that are mighty to drink wine, and stout men at drunkenness,” [Isaiah v. 22.] “Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness,—and THAT DAY come upon you suddenly,” [Luke xxi. 34.] “Be not deceived;—neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor drunkards, &c., shall possess the kingdom of God,” [1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.]

Conclude never to be so mad as to sell your birth-right to the kingdom of heaven, for the momentary gratification of sensuality.

OCTOBER 22.

Prescriptions against intemperance,

CONSIDER, first, that the person who has already experienced his own weakness by falling into sin, ought not to expose himself to what he knows was the occasion of his fall. Wherefore, he must carefully avoid the revellings and meetings of worldlings, and all such places and companies where excess is promoted and encouraged by common practice. Let no man here deceive himself with pretexts of civility or necessity: his soul and eternity are at stake. Let him not dread the displeasure of his drunken companions, rather than that of heaven. There is death in their cups; a mortal poison that reaches even to the soul.

Consider, secondly, that every christian in quality of disciple of our crucified Redeemer, ought to walk in the narrow way of self-denial, which he has pointed out by precept and example to all his followers. How much more is every sinner obliged to expiate his sins, by fasting and other mortifications? But we must not expect to acquire this spirit of mortification and penance, which will effectually deliver us from the vice of intemperance, without fervent prayer for the divine assistance.

Consider, thirdly, that the most sovereign of all remedies against intemperance, is the exercise of recollection, and the contemplation of heavenly truths. This creates in the soul another kind of appetite for the things of God, and gives her a disgust for all sensual and carnal satisfactions. The relish of truth, and the consideration and meditations on God's eternal banquet, in which he will inebriate his guests with the never-failing plenty of his house, and make them drink of the torrent of his pleasures, is abundantly sufficient to wean the soul from all sensual affections, and the delight of taste.

Conclude to use these prescriptions, if you would be pre-

served or freed from this mortal disease of intemperance: and eat not merely for pleasure, but to support nature in obedience to the will of God.

OCTOBER 23.

On the vice of envy.

CONSIDER, first, that envy, which is a repining at another's good because it seems to lessen our own, is the daughter of pride, and is a mortal sin of the spiritual kind. It makes a dreadful havoc in the soul, and yet, too often is hardly noticed by the unthinking children of this world! Christians, look well into yourselves, that this devouring serpent may have no lurking hole in the recesses of your soul. Ah! be always upon the watch, and instant in prayer, lest this enemy of all good should find means to fix his residence within your bosom.

Consider, secondly, that envy grieves where charity rejoices, and makes its slaves more and more miserable, whenever they see or hear of any advantage of their neighbor. God ought to be glorified for all his gifts and graces, which with a bountiful hand he plentifully bestows upon his creatures. But the envious man, instead of giving glory to God on these occasions, is grieved at his goodness, and would willingly, if he could, stop up the channel of his divine bounties: can there be greater perversity than this?

Consider, thirdly, that envy is the parent of hatred and malice. The envious are always prone to judge, censure, and condemn their neighbors; to put the worst construction upon all they say or do, and daily to detract and slander them. They are generally whisperers and tale-bearers: they seek upon all occasions to set others against them whom they envy; they oppose by word and action whatever tends to their good, and take a malicious pleasure in the evils which befall them. Was it not envy that made Cain murder his brother Abel, and Joseph's brethren sell him into Egypt? In a word, was it not envy which crucified the Son of God?

Conclude to detest this monster: it is a child of the devil, "by whose envy death" and all other evils, "first came into the world:" it is the pest of our own, and neighbor's happiness.

OCTOBER 24.

Remedies against envy.

CONSIDER, first, that as envy proceeds from pride, we must in the first place, endeavor perfectly to subdue this pernicious vice. This must be effected by humility and a true knowledge of ourselves: for whoever has a lively conviction of his own worthlessness, and that he deserves nothing but contempt, can not easily be proud; nor can an humble heart be ever envious. Therefore true humility and self-knowledge are excellent preservatives and sovereign remedies against envy.

Consider, secondly, that divine charity is a still more sovereign remedy against envy. Wheresoever charity reigns, envy, hatred, malice, and detraction can find no place. O blessed charity, which bringest with thee all other virtues and drivest away all vice; come and take up thy eternal abode in my soul; I know, that without thee I am nothing, and that other advantages without thee, will become in my regard real evils. I will therefore spare no pains to obtain thee: I will prefer thee before all the treasures of the universe.

Consider, thirdly, that as all christians aspire to the same heavenly country, the mansion of everlasting peace and love, they ought all to have but one heart and one soul. They have all manner of ties to oblige them to the strictest union and love; since they all have the same Father and Mother, God and his Church; are all brethren in Christ; are all redeemed by his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit in baptism; and all partake of his body and blood, the sacrament of union and of love. What a heaven should we enjoy even upon earth, if the life of every christian was influenced by these considerations? There would be no envy to disturb our peace of mind.

Conclude to pray with all earnestness for the amiable virtue of universal charity and humility. They will render you proof against all the vile suggestions of envy.

OCTOBER 25.*On the vice of spiritual sloth.*

CONSIDER, first, that spiritual sloth, whether we consider it in general, as a backwardness, negligence and carelessness with regard to the things of God and all christian virtues; or as a particular indisposition of soul with regard to the love of God opposite to the virtues of godliness, devotion, and prayer, and by divines placed among the seven capital vices,—is a most pernicious evil. When considerable in its kind, it ban-

ishes divine charity from the soul, and is a grievous mortal sin; it destroys the spiritual life of God's grace, and is the greatest of all obstacles to salvation.

Consider, secondly, that spiritual sloth occasions the neglect of prayer and other religious duties, and of the sacraments which are the channels of divine grace. St. Gregory sums up the following dreadful effects of this spiritual sloth; first, *despair*, or giving up the cause of God and of the soul; so as to have neither hope nor concern for our eternal salvation. Second, pusillanimity or cowardice, sinking from all pains and labor in the service of God. Third, a *numbness* of soul with regard to all the divine commandments. Fourth, *malice* or an aversion to all sanctity, and to its possessors. Fifth, a *rancor* or indignation against all who attempt to bring us to God. And lastly, a *dissipation* of mind, which draws our hearts from God, and fixes them upon creatures.

Consider, thirdly, that the vice of spiritual sloth is the more dangerous; because, like the rest of spiritual sins, it lies deeper in the soul, and is easier overlooked by those who will not take the pains to think, and to examine well the state of their conscience. *Carnal sins* are more easily discovered, because they are attended with greater infamy in the eyes of men: but spiritual vices, though less noticed by men, are more heinous in the sight of God, and thousands, it is to be feared, live and die without repentance or remorse, highly guilty of this mortal sin of sloth.

Conclude to examine well how you stand affected with regard to your spiritual advancement in the love and service of your God; if this be your principal and constant aim, all is well.

OCTOBER 26.

Remedies against spiritual sloth.

CONSIDER, first, that the daily consideration of the truths of eternity will effectually cure our sloth. We have a God to serve, and a soul to save. This God is infinitely good, and good to us. He is all goodness, beauty, truth, and all perfection: he is infinitely lovely, and our eternal lover: his Son came down from heaven for the love of us; he even died for our salvation. We have received and daily do receive many great benefits from him: his thought is always upon us. If, notwithstanding, we neglect his love and service, he threatens us with eternal evil; and death, judgment, and hell every instant gain ground upon us. And surely the frequent remembrance of all this must excite our fervor.

Consider, secondly, that the short term of this life is assign-

ed us by our Maker for nothing else, but to labor for an eternity. We shall have no other provision for eternity, but what we send before us by incessant labor during the twelve hours of this short day of our mortality. The moments of this time are precious; and the night will soon come on in which no man can work. Therefore, this precious time must be well spent, in "laboring by good works to make our calling and election sure," [2 Pet. i. 10.]

Consider, thirdly, the life and death of the Son of God, the great pattern of a christian. He was never idle; but was always employed in doing the will of his Father. Happy the christian who endeavors always to be thus employed. Read also, and consider often the lives of the saints, and excite yourself to fervor in the service of God by their example, and the contemplation of their glory. Call often to mind, that the eye of your great Master is always upon you; and be ashamed to be less diligent in his service, than worldlings are in the service of this earth.

Conclude to arm yourself by these and the like considerations against the pernicious vice of spiritual sloth: it will otherwise be your final ruin.

OCTOBER 27.

On the christian's warfare.

CONSIDER, first, that the life of a good christian is a perpetual warfare; agreeably to that of holy Job, [vii. 1.] His time of a true, settled, and solid peace is not to come, till after many a conflict, and many a victory. He must fight his way to heaven against a set of cruel, deceitful, and obstinate enemies, who will never cease, in life or death, to assault him. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood" alone; "but against principalities and powers,—against the spirits of wickedness in high places," [Eph. vi.] that is in the air which surrounds us. These wicked spirits mortally hate us, because we were created to fill their seats in heaven, forfeited by their sin. But, for our comfort we have a far greater power on our side, that of all the blessed spirits, and of God himself whose battles we are fighting.

Consider, secondly, that the devil and his wicked ones have engaged the world also, and the flesh, as auxiliaries in this warfare: these do much more harm, even than all the spirits of darkness. By the world, we mean the whole collection of poor deluded mortals, who have embraced, and endeavor to propagate by word and example, the impious laws and maxims of Satan. This wicked world is governed by "the lust of the

flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," [1 John ii. 16.] which we all renounced at baptism.

Consider, thirdly, that the chief part of our warfare consists in fighting continually against "the lust of the flesh;" that is, against our own evil inclinations and passions. Hence our Lord in his gospel, not only requires we should renounce all other things in the world, how near or dear soever they may be to us, in order to follow him: but especially insists, that we renounce ourselves, and hate ourselves in this life, if we desire to be his disciples, and to save our souls. Thus we shall effectually subdue the lust of the flesh, which is the most dangerous of all our enemies.

Conclude to fight manfully against them all till death; and you will not fail to receive the crown of life.

OCTOBER 28.

On St. Simon and St. Jude.

CONSIDER, first, that the apostles when they were chosen by Christ, were poor and contemptible in the eyes of the world, destitute of all those qualities which might recommend them to public notice, and quite illiterate; yet they were preferred by the wisdom of God, before all the wise, rich, and eloquent, to be his instruments in the great work of the conversion of the world; and were in fact best qualified, by their simplicity and humility, to show forth his glory. "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen," saith St. Paul, [1 Cor. i.] "that no flesh should glory in his sight."

Consider, secondly, that the apostles were made the chief priests, under Christ, of the New Testament, the first bishops and pastors of his church, the prime ministers of his kingdom, the dispensers of all his mysteries, and, next to Him, who is the chief corner-stone, the twelve foundations of his church, [Eph. ii. 20.] yea rather, of the heavenly Jerusalem, [Apoc. xxi. 14.] Christians, bless your Saviour on the festivals of the apostles, for his great favors to them, and through them, to his church in general, and to yourselves in particular; since through their ministry, by the channel of their successors in the church of Christ, you yourselves derive all spiritual blessings.

Consider, thirdly, that the apostles received great graces; and they faithfully corresponded on their part: at the first call they left all things else to follow Christ; and as he bears them witness, [Luke xxii. 27.] they "remained with him in his temptations:" their zeal and courage in his cause were invincible: their love for him was stronger than death: they even rejoiced that they were esteemed worthy to suffer for his name.

They planted the true Church of Christ by their doctrine and miracles, in the remotest regions of the earth, and have left in it a continued succession of saints, the standing *fruits* of their labors, agreeably to that of St. John, [xv. 16.]

Conclude, on the feasts of the apostles to listen to the lessons which they taught by word and work; and imitate their virtue.

OCTOBER 29.

On the Christian's armour.

CONSIDER, first, what kind of armour the apostle recommends for our spiritual conflict, (Eph. vi:) "Take unto you," saith he, "the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect: stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, (which is the word of God) by all prayer and supplication."

Consider, secondly, that the soldier of Christ must first have his "loins girt about with truth;" that is, he must set out with a firm resolution to restrain his passions and lusts, and to proceed with uprightness and simplicity of intention, in his undertakings. Then he must put on "the breast-plate," or coat of mail, of christian justice; by which is here understood the collection of all virtues, which each soldier of Christ must labor to acquire, against the temptations of the contrary vices. He must also have his "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" that is, he must walk in the ways of the gospel, which alone can insure to him true and everlasting peace.

Consider, thirdly, that to defend our souls against "the fiery darts of the most wicked one," we must have in readiness the "shield of faith," or a lively belief of the great truths of the gospel, with a sense of the divine presence, and the remembrance of death, judgment, hell and heaven. But then we must also make use of the "helmet of hope," and join an absolute distrust in ourselves, with an entire confidence in God. Thus we shall be an overmatch for all our enemies.

Conclude diligently to procure every part of this heavenly armour, and you may rest secure of victory.

OCTOBER 30.

On the christian's conflict.

CONSIDER, first, that in this spiritual warfare we must also be provided with a sword. Now "the sword of the spirit is the word of God." For the truths of God's heavenly word, heard from his ministers or read in good books, when embraced with a lively faith, and pondered at leisure by deep meditation, serve both to defend us, and to annoy the enemy: they are both a shield and a sword. They baffle and defeat all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil; and they attack and beat down the united forces of these adversaries.

Consider, secondly, that earnest and perseverant prayer and supplication, must complete this suit of christian armour. And, we may say with absolute truth, that no one is overcome but for want of prayer, and that its neglect is the original cause of the misfortune of all who fall from God by sin. For his infinite goodness never forsakes those who do not first forsake him: he is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength, but will assuredly give us the victory, if we always cast ourselves into his arms, by fervent and humble prayer.

Consider, thirdly, that our dear Redeemer bids his disciples join watchfulness with prayer: "watch," says he, "and pray, that you enter not into temptation," (Matt. xxvi.) remembering that though our "spirit be willing," our "flesh is frail." This watching is the more necessary, as the spirits of darkness are always laying ambushes, and use a thousand deceits to ensnare us, and oftener prevail by stratagem than by open assault.

Conclude to arm yourself with the word and the truths of God, and by diligent "watching and praying:" thus all your conflicts will prove successful.

OCTOBER 31.*On the four cardinal virtues.*

CONSIDER, first, that prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, are called cardinal virtues, because they are the *hinges* upon which the whole life of a christian must constantly move. Of these the wise man says, they are "such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life," (Wisdom viii. 7.) Every virtue must be *prudent* and discreet, otherwise it degenerates into vice; it must be *just* both with respect to God, to one's neighbors, and to one's self; stout and valiant, firm

and constant in adhering to what is right, and opposing iniquity; and it must be sober and *temperate*, by not exceeding the bounds of due moderation, prescribed by right reason and religion.

Consider, secondly, that christian prudence teaches us what is good, and what is evil, in every occurrence of life. It directs all our words and actions in such manner, as that we neither decline out of the way, or offend ourselves, nor give occasion of offence to others: it makes always proper choice of the means to bring us to our sovereign good. Its offices are: to design and *consult well*, to judge right, and to direct well the execution; but all this, with dependence on divine grace, and not on one's own industry and abilities.

Consider, thirdly, the offices, and the excellence of the other three cardinal virtues. *Justice* renders to every one his due, and wrongs no man, in word, action, omission or desire. With regard to God, it obliges us before all things to dedicate our whole heart and soul to him, to whom all is due. *Fortitude* arms the soul with invincible courage, in her warfare against her spiritual enemies, to do her duty, and with resolution to suffer all, rather than to sin. Lastly, *temperance* restrains all immoderation in eating or drinking, with all other excesses of our passions or lusts, and keeps us within the bounds of right reason, and the law of nature and religion.

Conclude to esteem and earnestly beg of God these excellent virtues; of which we continually stand in need.

NOVEMBER 1.

On the feast of all the saints.

CONSIDER, first, that on this day the church of God honors with a solemn festival, the virtues, the triumphs and the eternal jubilee of all the saints and citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem—1. in order to give glory and praise on their account to the God of all the saints, and to his Son Jesus Christ, the author of all their virtues: 2. to encourage all her children to walk in their footsteps, in hopes of the like reward: 3. to teach them to join in the mean time, in a holy *communion* with them; and to procure the assistance of their prayers and intercession.

Consider, secondly, that all these holy ones, whose feast we celebrate this day, are entered into the never-ending joys of their Lord, at a very cheap rate: the yoke of his divine service, which they bore for the short time of their pilgrimage, was very *sweet* to them; and their *burden* very *light*. Grace and love made all things easy, which they did for their beloved. He

himself supported them in such manner, as to carry both them and their crosses too, upon his own shoulders. My soul, hast not thou the same God as they had? Hast not thou the same Saviour, Jesus Christ? Hast thou not all the same helps and means of grace as they had! Why then mayest not thou also, aspire to the same happiness and glory?

Consider, thirdly, that as divine love is the great principle of all sanctity; so we have before our eyes this day the bright example of millions of heavenly lovers, to excite us to love: This most amiable and ever blessed Virgin; these innumerable legions of angelic spirits; these cherubim and seraphim, all on fire with love; these patriarchs and prophets; these apostles of the Lamb, sent by him to spread over all the earth the bright flames of love; those armies of martyrs, who all laid down their lives for love; those millions of holy confessors: in a word, all those spotless virgins, the spouses of divine love; whose love of God was stronger than death. O may our frozen hearts receive some warmth at least, from all their flames.

Conclude to love, honor and imitate the saints of God. Thus shall you experience their powerful intercession at present, and enjoy their blissfull society hereafter.

NOVEMBER 2.

On the commemoration of all souls.

CONSIDER, first, that on this day the church of God, attending to the necessities of great numbers of her children departed out of this life, in her faith and communion, but not without some blemish of sin in their souls; some smaller stains, at least, of "idle words," or other venial offences; some "wood, hay, or stubble" in their building, according to the language of St. Paul, which cannot stand the fire; or some debt to divine justice on account of former sins not sufficiently expiated by penance,—turns all her prayers and sacrifices to procure for them a full pardon, and a speedy admittance into eternal rest. O how *holy* and *wholesome* is the institution of this day of expiation! "to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins!" (2 Macchab. xii. 46.) Alas! how few depart this life so *pure*, as to be immediately admitted to that blessed city above, where "nothing defiled can enter in!" (Apoc. xxi. 2.) It is then a duty of christian charity incumbent on us all, to pray for our brethren who are gone before us, that they may rest in peace.

Consider, secondly, that the spiritual works of mercy are of all the most acceptable to God; and praying for the dead is justly numbered among these spiritual works of mercy, since

it is doing the souls of our brethren the greatest charity imaginable. In effect, we thus contribute, as far as we are able, to deliver them from their evils, and to bring them to their sovereign good. It is also a most excellent mean of obtaining mercy for ourselves; "for the merciful shall obtain mercy," (Matth. xi. 7.)

Consider, thirdly, that fasting and other exercises of penance and charity, performed in behalf of the faithful departed, according to the religious custom of former ages, and the practice of our pious ancestors in their doles at the funerals of the dead,—are of great benefit to them. But the sacrifice of the body and blood of our Lord in the holy mass, pleads still more powerfully in favor of the living and the dead.

Conclude diligently to assist the souls of the faithful departed, both by prayers, alms, and this holy oblation of the blood of Christ. Your charity for them may one day prove highly beneficial to yourself.

NOVEMBER 3.

On the obligation of all christians to be saints.

CONSIDER, first, how God declares in his word, that all his people ought to be saints. "Be ye holy, because I, the Lord your God am holy,"—was what he continually inculcated in the Old Testament: and in the New, the Son of God cries out to us all, (Matth. v. 14.) "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." And the apostle tells us, [Rom. i. 7.] that all christians are "CALLED to be saints—a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people;" [1 Peter ii. 9.] Hence the name of *saints* is appropriated by St. Paul to all the faithful.

Consider, secondly, that though all are not commanded to work miracles, or to exercise extraordinary austerities, or to retire into deserts to spend their whole time in prayer, or to sell all they have and give it to the poor, (for there have been many very great saints, who have done none of these things;) yet ALL are commanded to love God with their whole heart, with their whole soul, with their whole mind, and with their whole strength. Do this, my soul, and thou also shalt be a saint: but without this, nothing else will avail.

Consider, thirdly, that we are the "children of God;" and therefore should bear some resemblance of our Father, by an imitation of his sanctity. 2. We are his *spouses*; and therefore must keep ourselves undefiled, if we aspire to an eternal union with him. 3. We are his *temples*; and consequently must be ever *holy*. 4. We are the *members* of Jesus Christ,

and must live by his spirit, the spirit of sanctity. 5. We belong to God by creation; and it is his absolute will that we should be saints. 6. The Son of God delivered himself up for us, "to wash us from our sins in his own blood," and thus to make us saints. Lastly, we are strictly bound by our baptismal vows, and numberless other obligations, to sanctity.

Conclude to lead henceforward a new and *saintly* life; and strive to make daily progress in divine charity.

NOVEMBER 4.

On the means we all have to become saints.

CONSIDER, first, that God, in commanding us all to become saints, does not command what is impossible. Witness those manifold graces and spiritual helps, with which he continually favors us; to which if we daily attended, we should all be saints. Witness that early knowledge of his heavenly truths; those repeated invitations, with which he sweetly presses us to be converted from our evil ways, and to turn to him. If we did but welcome these first divine calls, they would produce in our souls strong desires of christian perfection, and that "hunger and thirst after justice," recommended by our Lord, which never fails of being *filled*, [Matth. v. 7.]

Consider, secondly, the particular means of divine grace, which we enjoy in the church of God. The sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ, on purpose to make us saints; especially that most holy sacrament and divine sacrifice of his own body and blood; in which we have always in the midst of us, and may daily approach, the very fountain of all sanctity. O christian, one good and perfect communion might suffice to make you a saint! Besides the advantages derived from the frequent hearing and reading of the word of God, from the great examples of the saints, and of the living servants of God; from the mysteries of our redemption so often rendered in a manner present to the eyes of our soul in the public worship of the church; and abundant other helps to perfection. If then we are not saints, the fault must be in ourselves.

Consider, thirdly, that the *yoke* of the Lord is *sweet*, and his *burden light*. We may apply to his commandment of our being saints, what is written in holy scripture, [Deut. xxx. 11. &c.] "This commandment which I command thee this day, is not above thee, nor far off from thee: nor is it in heaven, that thou shouldst say; which of us can go up to heaven, to bring it to us:—nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayest excuse thyself and say; which of us can cross the sea. But the word is very nigh unto thee,—in thy mouth and in thy heart,

that thou mayest do it." Yes, christians; the grace of God is very near us: we shall find it in the diligent practice of recollection and mental prayer; and it will make all our duties and labors sweet and easy,

Conclude to embrace in practice all these means of sanctity; and you will have no reason to complain that you cannot be a saint.

NOVEMBER 5.

On the perfection of our ordinary actions.

CONSIDER, first, that sanctity consists not in the working of miracles,—in having visions, revelations and extasies,—or in the gifts of prophecy, of tongues, or an eminent knowledge of the most sublime and divine truths, as some christians vainly imagine. We often read instances of this nature in the lives of saints; but none of these things made them saints. They had been found even in such as were not saints; while, on the other hand, many eminent scripture saints have had none of them: neither ought any humble christian to desire such things as these, though every christian ought to endeavor to be a saint. Nor does sanctity consist in much fasting, in wearing hair shirts, in abundant alms, long prayers or other extraordinary practices, which may be found even in the proud, the selfish, and the uncharitable: it consists in true humility, self-denial and sincere love of God and our neighbor: without these, there is no sanctity.

Consider, secondly, that sanctity does not so much depend upon doing *extraordinary* actions, as upon doing our *ordinary* actions *extraordinarily* well. Neither will it cost us more to do them well, than to do them ill: on the contrary, the better we perform them, the more easy and delightful they will be to us; and the grace of God and his blessing will attend all we do. Nothing more will be required to make us saints.

Consider, thirdly, that the perfection of our ordinary actions depends upon the purity of intention, with which we refer all our thoughts, words and works, to the love and service of our God: for thus we make his holy will the rule of all we do, beginning every work by offering it, together with our hearts, to him; and fervently renewing this offering in the midst of our employments. Thus shall our "days go on by God's ordinance:" thus shall they "all serve him." [Ps. cxviii. 91.]

Conclude, by following these rules, to make your ordinary actions acts of virtue and divine love; and if they are disagreeable to nature, they may thus become also acts of penance.

NOVEMBER 6.

On the sanctity of the christian's institute.

CONSIDER, first, that the christian religion is in the nature of a religious order or institute, founded by Jesus Christ our Lord. Its origin is *heavenly*: its rule is *heavenly*, being God's own word, and the gospel of his Son: and its tendency is *heavenly*: for it tends to conduct us to our sovereign good. The means too, which it furnishes for this end, are *heavenly*; for instance, the communications of divine grace, the sacred mysteries and sacraments of divine institution, and the like. The christian makes his solemn religious profession at the foot of the altar, in baptism: he engages by vow to renounce the world, the flesh and the devil; and to lead an innocent and saintly life: he receives for his habit, with a charge to keep it all his life without spot or stain, the white robe of innocence and purity; and puts on Jesus Christ, in order to a new and spiritual life.

Consider, secondly, that the dignity of a christian is indeed very great. He has the honor to be enrolled in the service of the great King: he is made his friend and his favorite: he is even adopted through Jesus Christ, to be a child of God and heir to his eternal kingdom. The Son of God has made him partaker of his Spirit; of his kingly and priestly unction, and, in some measure, of his divine nature. But alas! may we not too justly apply to the greatest part of those who are raised to this inexpressible dignity, that of the royal prophet: man when he was in honor did not understand; "he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them." [Ps. xlviii. 21.]

Consider, thirdly, that the essential duties of every christian, are reduced by the psalmist into a small compass. "Turn away from evil and do good." The first part requires a settled determination of the soul never to commit a wilful mortal sin, for any consideration whatever; no not even to save one's life. The second part requires a constant attention to do the will of God in all things, and to advance every day in divine love. Do this, my soul, and thou shalt be a saint.

Conclude henceforward to have always before your eyes both the dignity and sanctity of the christian character, and to show it forth in your life.

NOVEMBER 7.

On following the light of Christ.

CONSIDER, first, that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be our *light*; to enlighten our souls with the *light* of his heavenly truths; to dispel the *darkness* of errors and vices, and to impart to us: 'the light of faith,' till the true *day-dawn* and "day-star arise in our hearts," (2 Pet. i. 19.) "I am the light of the world," saith our Lord; (John viii. 12.) he "that followeth me, walketh not in darkness." Ah! my soul, be not of the unhappy number of those, who "love darkness rather than the light," (John iii. 19.)

Consider, secondly, that this *light* of Christ teaches us to know both God and ourselves: it teaches us in fact all virtues; poverty of spirit, humility, self-denial, meekness and patience, penance and conformity to the will of God, and divine charity: it points out to us the way to perfection and to a happy eternity: it conducts us to God himself, and to the *light of life* which is with him.

Consider, thirdly, that in order to obtain the *light* of life, we must follow Christ by walking in his footsteps and imitating his virtues, not less than by faith. "If we would be truly enlightened," says the Following of Christ, "and be delivered from all blindness of heart, let it be our chief study to meditate on the life of Jesus, and imitate his life and manners," (L. i. chap. 1.) Thus we shall truly follow Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life," and shall not "walk in darkness."

Conclude henceforward diligently to adhere in practice to the heavenly light both of the doctrine, and of the example of the Lord Jesus.

NOVEMBER 8.

One thing is necessary, (Luke x. 42.)

CONSIDER, first, what a multiplicity of cares and concerns about empty vanities and worldly toys, is apt to engross our whole attention. How busy are we all the day long about mere trifles! What a variety of amusements distracts our thoughts! In what dissipation do we generally live! How little is there of God in our daily conversation! How few of our words or actions are referred to him! And yet we are not ignorant, that there is but "one thing necessary;" namely, our eternal salvation!

Consider, secondly, that this alone was the great end for

which we were sent into this world; nothing else in comparison ought to be called our business, whatever may be our calling or employment, all our thoughts, words, and works should be referred to God and eternity; whatever diverts our attention from this great business is hurtful; it is pernicious to us: whatever has no tendency to this one thing necessary, is all useless and vain: for "what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.)

Consider, thirdly, those words of our Saviour, (Matt. vi. 33.) "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." This kingdom of God is the kingdom of grace in our souls; it is the "kingdom of divine love." This we must seek above all things else: this *justice* of God which makes us *just indeed* must be the first and dearest object of our longing desires: for this we must continually pray with all the fervor of our heart. Other things, as far as they are expedient for us, will not be wanting.

Conclude then, to look well to this "one thing necessary;" and all will be well with you, for time and eternity.

NOVEMBER 9.

Strive to enter by the narrow gate, (Luke xiii. 24.)

CONSIDER, first, that there are two ways by which men walk in this life, and two gates out of this life into eternity. One of these ways is *broad* and spacious; agreeable to the world and to the flesh, and crowded with vast multitudes whom it conducts down the hill to a *wide gate*, and to a miserable eternity. The other way is *straight* and rugged; it restrains the liberties and passions of worldlings, and is disagreeable to the corrupt inclinations of flesh and blood; and therefore few, in comparison; care to walk in it: but these few walk on cheerfully towards the *gate of life* and immortality, assisted and comforted by Jesus Christ.

Consider, secondly, what is the reason numbers of christians walk on with so little concern in the broad road "that leadeth to destruction," in spite of the solemn declaration of the gospel, (Matt. vi. 13, 14.) and of the light of their faith. Ah! it is their want of thinking, they wilfully shut their eyes against the light; and thus run blindfold to the precipice: they are fascinated by cheating vanities, (Wisdom vi.) nay, they are downright mad, preferring as they do in effect, the dreadful and eternal torments of hell, to the never-ending and inconceivable joys of heaven.

Consider, thirdly, that God on his part desires that all may be saved; and may come to the knowledge of the truth; and

his Son Christ Jesus gave himself a redemption for all, (1 Tim. ii. 4, 6.) If then, as the gospel informs us, "many are called, but few are chosen," it cannot be the want of good will in God, but of correspondence on the part of man. The far greater part of mortals are fond of the broad road of sensual gratification, and prefer the high-way of the world,—the way of self-love, of the "lust of the flesh," and of "the pride of life," before the narrow-way to self-denial, and the love of God. Thus they are wanting to the essential conditions of salvation.

Conclude to live always in the fear of God, and keep his commandments; and you shall be of the number of the *chosen*.

NOVEMBER 10.

No man can serve two masters, (Matt. vi. 24.)

CONSIDER, first, that the service of God and that of the world, his mortal enemy, cannot subsist together. "No man can serve two masters," or two opposite interests. We are bound by every tie to serve God; and his service will make us happy both here and hereafter. But what pretensions can the world, the flesh, or the devil, have to our service? They are all of them declared enemies to our true welfare, and our eternal salvation: if we serve them we are lost for ever. Turn thyself then, O my soul, to thy sovereign good, and vow an eternal allegiance to the King of heaven.

Consider, secondly, that no man is disposed to serve the devil for his own sake; but this wicked enemy makes use of the *mammon* of the world, and the allurements of the flesh, as baits to draw unthinking mortals to himself. These he glosses over and represents as solid goods, and engages their affections to the prejudice of divine love. Therefore we are frequently admonished in holy scripture, of these baits of Satan and especially against the love and service of this mammon of iniquity, as quite opposite to the service of God, and destructive of salvation.

Consider, thirdly, that our God is a *jealous* lover: he will allow of no love which is not regular and orderly, and in subjection to the love of him. He cannot bear a divided heart, (Osea x. 2.) And, as we cannot both serve God and mammon; so we cannot serve both God and pleasure; we cannot serve both God and pride; we cannot serve both God and our impure affections. He expects to reign in our hearts without control: he will not admit of any rival there. You must then be wholly his without reserve; or he will certainly reject you.

Conclude to fear God alone, love him alone, and give your

whole self to him alone; since he made your heart for himself, and all things else for you.

NOVEMBER 11.

He that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple, (Luke xiv. 33.)

CONSIDER, first, that in quality of christians, we ought all to be *disciples* of Christ Jesus: the very name of *christian* implies as much; and the first christians were known by no other name than that of disciples, or scholars of this heavenly master. If then you wish to be a disciple of Christ,—a true christian,—you must renounce all things else to follow him: you must renounce them, if not in effect, at least in *affection*, by withdrawing from them your heart, and giving it to God alone:—and, *in effect* too, when they hinder you from following Christ.

Consider, secondly, that every christian, like the man in the gospel who purposes to build a tower, if he desires to be happy for ever, must raise a spiritual building, proof against all storms and inundations; a *tower*, that may stand for ever; and every christian is engaged like the king in the parable, in a warfare against the prince of darkness and all his allies; if he fails of victory, he must be miserable for eternity. Therefore, he must sit down and compute the necessary charges of this building; he must raise a sufficient force to carry on this war with success. This he will effect by renouncing all to follow Christ, who will impart to him his infinite treasures, and make him triumph over all his enemies.

Consider, thirdly, that those who have not yet mortified their affections to the things of this world, employ upon them their thoughts; that the time which should be laid out in carrying on the great building, is all wasted upon these; and the builders amuse themselves with the chains of their criminal attachments. Nor does any thing give the spirits of darkness a greater hold of us in the struggle in which we are engaged, than our unmortified affections to created objects.

Conclude to withdraw your affections from all earthly things, and to disregard whatever tends to make you less fervent in the love and service of your Creator.

NOVEMBER 12.

If any man will come after me let him deny himself,
(Matt. xvi. 24.)

CONSIDER, first, that the disciple of Jesus Christ, by the rule of the gospel, must also *renounce* and *deny himself*: for *self-love* is a capital enemy to the love of God, and the parent of all vices. Therefore the gospel of Jesus Christ directs us even to *hate* ourselves, or, as it is expressed in the original, (Luke xiv. 26. John xii. 25.) to "*hate our souls*" in this life, in order to save them in the next. Such are the conditions upon which we are admitted disciples of the Son of God.

Consider, secondly, that this denying and renouncing of ourselves, is in effect loving ourselves, because it procures us the greatest good, and conducts us to eternal felicity. On the other hand, that unhappy *self-seeking* and gratification in this world, is indeed *hating* ourselves, by reason of the mischiefs it brings upon us both here and hereafter. If then we are bound to renounce all affection to exterior things for the love of Christ; how much more strictly are we obliged to renounce *self-love*, which is far more apt to captivate the heart, and to exclude the love of God?

Consider, thirdly, the sentiments of a great servant of God upon this subject, speaking in the person of Christ. "Son," says he, "as far as thou canst go out of thyself, thou shalt in proportion enter into me. As the desire of nothing abroad brings peace at home, so the relinquishing of thyself interiorly, joins thee to God. I wish thee to learn the perfect renunciation of thyself, in my will without contradiction or complaint. Follow me: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' If thou wilt be my disciple, deny thyself." (Following of Christ, b. iii. 56.)

Conclude heartily to adopt these sentiments in the practice of your life. Were you to give ten thousand worlds for the happiness of becoming a true disciple of Jesus, all would be too little for the purchase.

NOVEMBER 13.

Except your justice exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,
(Matt. v. 20.)

CONSIDER, first, that the Scribes and Pharisees, whose justice we are to exceed, possessed the greatest zeal for the law of God and the true religion: they prayed much, gave large

alms, and fasted frequently; so that, among the people, they passed for saints. Let us now examine in what their justice was defective, that we may learn to avoid their faults, and see what kind of justice, and what degree of virtue is necessary to conduct us safe to heaven—lest otherwise we catch at the shadow, and lose the substance, together with our immortal souls.

Consider, secondly, that the Scribes and Pharisees sought not God, but themselves, in all their actions: their prayers, their alms, their fastings, were directed towards the acquiring of human applause, to the end they might be honored and esteemed by men. And while they avoided the more scandalous excesses of drunkenness and impurity, which would have rendered them infamous in the eyes of the world, they made no scruple of the spiritual sins, (still more odious to Almighty God) of envy, hatred, detraction, covetousness, and an extravagant pride, joined with a contempt of other men. Thus their virtues were but counterfeit, their vices real.

Consider, thirdly, that the *justice* which Jesus Christ requires of us all, is—to be “poor in spirit,” (Matt. v. 3.)—to be “humble, like a little child,” (Matt. xviii. 3, 4.)—to “love the Lord our God with our whole heart, and with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, and with our whole strength; and our neighbor as ourselves.” This is christian justice indeed: “Do this and you shall live.” But where any part of this is wanting, nothing can supply the defect, or make any person just. For, “not every one that saith to me, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he only, who shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven,” (Matt. vii. 21.)

Conclude, since neither alms, nor prayer, nor fasting, nor any outward worship without the inward spirit, will suffice; to seek this christian justice in the fulfilling of the law of God.

NOVEMBER 14.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure, (Matthew xiii. 44.)

CONSIDER, first, that by the kingdom of heaven, in this and many other passages in the gospel, is meant that heavenly kingdom of “the grace of God within our souls.” A heavenly kingdom indeed, which we are commanded to seek in the first place, (Matth. vi. 33.) and for which we daily pray in the second petition of the Lord’s prayer. Do you consider this kingdom of divine grace as a treasure indeed? Is your heart set upon it? For “where your treasure is, there also

your heart will be." Are you willing to purchase at any rate that blessed field, where this immense treasure lies?

Consider, secondly, that the field in which this spiritual treasure is concealed, is true wisdom; it is a devout and virtuous life; it is the following of Christ in good earnest, and being his true disciples. To purchase a field of such value, we must part with all things else; we must give up all other affections, to embrace and follow Christ: in exchange, he will make over to us all his treasures, and himself into the bargain. How unhappy are the children of this world, who set at naught this invaluable possession!

Consider, thirdly, that the pondering well by deep meditation on eternal truths, is like digging for the treasure of the kingdom of heaven; and the forming of the affections and resolutions of the soul, by which she is determined, at all events, to consecrate the remainder of life to divine love, is like selling all to purchase the field where this treasure lies deposited. Yes, my soul; it is by daily opening thy eyes to the light of God, and to his divine truths, in meditation, that thou shalt discover the beauty of holiness;—how sweet it is to love God; how happy to serve him in good earnest.

Conclude to dig daily in the field of virtue and devotion for this treasure of the kingdom of heaven, by mental prayer; and you will assuredly find it.

NOVEMBER 15.

On the Marriage Feast, (Matthew xxii.)

CONSIDER, first, that the Son of God came down from heaven to espouse to himself our human nature by the mystery of his incarnation, and every one of our souls in particular; by an admirable union of grace and love. The marriage-feast is begun here upon earth by grace, in the souls of those who come to Christ with faith and love; and shall continue eternally in heaven. To this marriage-feast both Jews and Gentiles were long ago invited, by the apostles and other messengers of God; and all nations even to this present time, both by apostolic preachers sent for their conversion, and by various heavenly calls and inspirations in order to their salvation.

Consider, secondly, the infinite goodness of God, manifested to us in this parable,—and the stupid ingratitude of thoughtless mortals, who daily slight and neglect this divine invitation. How blind; how miserable; how wicked are they—to prefer those worldly toys, their farm, their traffic, their earthly concerns, before that divine banquet with which God desires to entertain their souls;—here, by the choicest blessings and

communications of his grace; hereafter, by inebriating them for ever with the plenty of "his house, and making them drink of the torrent of his pleasure, at the very head of the fountain of life!"

Consider, thirdly, the dreadful consequences of neglecting or rejecting the heavenly invitations by which we are called to the "marriage-feast of the Lamb." Alas! this crying sin is the cause of the reprobation of all that are lost! Accordingly, our Lord concludes the parable with that terrible sentence, that "many are called, but few are chosen;" to convince us that, if we are not of the number of the elect, the fault is entirely our own, in not answering the calls of heaven.

Conclude to accept with gratitude the heavenly invitation; but take along with you the "wedding garment" of divine love: without this, you will be "cast into exterior darkness."

NOVEMBER 16.

The parable of the barren fig tree, (Luke xiii.)

CONSIDER, first, that all christians are like trees, planted in the vineyard of Christ; and that he expects them all to bring forth good fruit, each one in his kind. He will not be content with beautiful leaves: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire," (Matthew vii. 19.) This sentence stands against all such trees as are barren in our Lord's vineyard. However, as we see in the parable of the fig tree, God in his great patience and mercy, bears with them for a while, and suspends the execution of the sentence, in hopes they will one day bring forth good fruit; till at length, after repeated disappointments, he cuts them down to be the fuel of an eternal fire.

Consider, secondly, what fruit you yourself have hitherto brought forth? Alas! have you not at the best contented yourself with the leaves of some outward performances, like those of the Scribes and Pharisees; pleasing to the eye, without any fruit of solid christian virtue? If so, remember the sentence which stands out against you, and prevent the execution by a speedy and hearty repentance: begin now at least to bring forth the good fruit of a new life, before your reprieve expire: the term is to you unknown, and may be very near.

Consider, thirdly, that this "good fruit" is not the refraining from scandalous excesses, or the leading of a moral honest life, as many pagans have done:—it consists in true humility: in the renunciation of our own will, our passions and corrupt inclinations, by the virtues of obedience and self-denial;—in a universal conformity with the holy will of God; and above all

things, in true and perfect charity. These are good fruits indeed. But if these, are wanting, neither alms, nor fasting, nor long prayers, nor daily frequenting the sacraments, nor any practice of piety whatever, can rescue any one from the fire.

Conclude to look well to yourself, and carefully remove whatever may prevent you from bringing forth "good fruit." On this depends your eternal welfare.

NOVEMBER 17.

On the parable of the Prodigal Son, (Luke xv.)

CONSIDER, first, that in the "prodigal son," is exhibited a lively image of the misery of every poor sinner. Such a one by wilful sin goes away from his Father's house into a "far country," even the region of death: he forfeits and squanders away all the graces received from God, and abuses all his gifts and talents in the gratification of his criminal passions. But alas! he soon experiences the famine which reigns in that country:—a dreadful famine indeed:—a dismal want of the bread of life and of all spiritual nourishment:—a perpetual emptiness of the soul, which can never be satisfied till the sinner's happy return to his Father's house.

Consider, secondly, that the poor deluded soul, when she leaves her Father's house, and forgets her God, abandons also, and forgets herself; she even imagines herself free, under the worst of slaveries; rich, under the extremity of want; honorable and happy, in the midst of wretchedness and disgrace! But when she begins to open her inward eyes to the light of God by serious consideration, and to "return into herself," she is greatly alarmed at her present condition, and the dreadful dangers which surround her. She then arises without delay, and returns in haste to her Father's house with the sentiments of a contrite and humble heart, which she knows will never be rejected.

Consider, thirdly, in this parable, the infinite goodness and mercy of God. He did not wait till the prodigal arrived: but "when he was yet a great way off, he saw him, and was moved with compassion; and running to him, he fell upon his neck and kissed him." He then ordered "his servants to bring forth quickly the first robe,—and to put a ring upon his hand, and shoes on his feet, and to bring the fatted calf and kill it: and let us eat," saith he, "and make merry: because this my son was dead and is come to life, he was lost and is found." Thus does our most merciful God daily deal with penitent sinners.

Conclude, if your case be like that of the prodigal, and you are at a great distance from God by mortal sin, to imitate without delay his sincere and humble repentance.

NOVEMBER 18.

The parable of the unjust steward, (Luke xvi.)

CONSIDER, first, that we are all stewards of our heavenly master, and our having so often like the unjust steward wasted his goods, ought to give us a just apprehension of our being quickly called to an account, and deprived of our stewardship. Wherefore, in order to our future support, we must make to ourselves friends by the good use of the mammon of this world; that is, by liberal alms to the poor, and the diligent exercise of charity in all its branches: we must do our endeavors to reclaim sinners from the error of their way, and thus procure them a discharge from their debts; and our Lord will commend us for having "done wisely," by thus engaging friends to stand by us "in the evil day."

Consider, secondly, that all that we have is the Lord's: our very being; our whole soul and body; all our powers, faculties and senses; all our gifts and talents; our whole time, and all our worldly substance, are alike his property. If we waste any part of these goods, we are unjust stewards; and the employing of any one of them otherwise than according to his holy will and his divine ordinances, will be accounted wasting them in the eyes of our great Lord and Master. Alas! when he shall rise in judgment, who shall be able to answer to one article in a thousand.

Consider, thirdly, O my soul, those words in the parable as addressed this day to thee: "give an account of thy stewardship." What couldst thou say for thyself if thy accounts were to be immediately examined. Thou knowest not the day nor the hour. Why then shouldst thou expose thyself any longer to the dreadful danger of being called upon when unprepared, to thy eternal condemnation? Ah! how little has thy time been employed in the love and service of thy God? How often has his choicest gifts and talents been abused? Alas! in what a dreadful state are all thy accounts!

Conclude, now at least to set thy accounts in order, to rectify all that has hitherto been amiss, and henceforward to commence a new course.

NOVEMBER 19.

The rich man and the poor beggar, (Luke xvi.)

CONSIDER, first, the words of our Lord in the gospel. "There was a certain man," saith he, "who was clothed in purple and fine linnen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and no one did give him:—and it came to pass that the beggar died, and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died; and he was buried in hell." Behold here the dismal end of worldly enjoyments and a luxurious life.

Consider, secondly, that this unhappy man, "lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: and he cried and said; father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life time; and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; nor from thence to come hither," &c.

Consider, thirdly, what it was that brought the rich man to this place of eternal woe, since there is no mention in the gospel of any scandalous excesses, and it is only said that "he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day;" things in which, considering his state and condition, the world can see no sin. What then can we suppose to have been the occasion of his damnation? Ah! his sins were chiefly sins of omission. He neglected the service of God: he loved his pleasures more than Him: he had no concern for the poor, and led a useless, idle life. In a word, he lived in a continual breach of the two great commandments; of loving God with his whole heart, and his neighbor as himself; and certainly, there needs no other sins to sentence any man to hell.

Conclude to make such use of the goods and evils of this transitory life, that both may conduce to your eternal happiness. If poverty be your lot, remember Lazarus, and stifle your complaints.

NOVEMBER 20.

On the charitable Samaritan, [Luke x.]

CONSIDER, first, in this parable, the wretched condition into which man was fallen by sin. Going down from "Jerusalem," [which is interpreted "the vision of peace,"] to "Jerico," [which signifies "the moon"]—that is, turning his back upon his God and all true peace, to seek a false happiness in the forbidden fruits of worldly enjoyments, "he fell among robbers;" that is, he fell into the hands of wicked spirits, and became their prey. By them he was stripped of all the gifts of grace with which he had been adorned by his Creator, and was grievously wounded in all his powers and faculties. Thus he lay "half dead;" his better part, the soul, being dead indeed, by the loss of its true life, which is the grace of God; and both soul and body being condemned to a second and eternal death. In this state he must for ever have remained, incapable, of himself, to take one step towards his deliverance, had not our charitable Samaritan, the Son of God, come down from heaven to his relief.

Consider, secondly, what this infinite goodness has done in favor of lost man. Alas! the Priest and the Levite passed us by, and left us languishing under all our wounds and miseries. For the law and its ministers were not able to heal, or to relieve us. But our good Samaritan, the Lord Jesus, has bound up our wounds, and has suffered himself to be "wounded for our iniquities;" that "by his stripes we might be healed." He has applied to our wounded souls the heavenly medicines of his sacraments, signified by the wine and oil. He has brought us to the blessed inn of his holy church, where all graces and means of salvation are abundantly afforded to those that ask and seek: he has given the charge of our souls to the keepers of this inn; that is, to his apostles and their successors—the pastors of this his holy church, divinely commissioned and assisted by him; and has promised them a most ample reward in eternal bliss, for the care they shall have taken of us.

Consider, thirdly, what return our merciful and loving Redeemer expects at our hands, for his excessive goodness to us. He desires no other return, than that we should love him, and show mercy to one another: "Go thou," says he, in the application of the parable, "and do in like manner;" that is, show thou the like mercy and charity to thy neighbors for my sake, as I have shown to thee.

Conclude to follow this great example. Love your neighbor for God's sake; and you shall have "fulfilled the law."

NOVEMBER 21.

On the presentation of the Blessed Virgin.

CONSIDER, first, what a happiness it is, to be dedicated from one's infancy to the love and service of our God. It is the duty of all parents in regard of their children, to imitate the pious example of St. Joachim and St. Ann. They presented their daughter, the blessed Virgin Mary, in her childhood, to God in his temple. Here she made a voluntary offering of herself to serve the Lord, and remained with other virgins in an apartment allotted for that purpose, in the courts of the temple. Thus she was happily removed at a distance from the contagion of bad company, and from all the false maxims and corrupt ways of a wicked world.

Consider, secondly, with what profound adoration this most holy Virgin worshipped the divine Majesty, at her first entrance into his temple. In this her sacred retreat from the world, she gave the first example of a vow of perpetual virginity, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; desiring in all things to choose the better part. Learn of her a love of purity and chastity, and a resolution of preserving it with all possible perfection, according to your condition of life; and for this end daily beg the assistance of her prayers.

Consider, thirdly, that the blessed Virgin, who never received the grace of God in vain, improved continually in all virtues. She ascended the mystical ladder of Jacob, which reached from earth to heaven, [Gen. xxviii.] by employing a great part of her days in spiritual "reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation," which St. Bernard calls the steps of this heavenly ladder. And she descended again by the humble exercise of manual labor, for the service of the temple, for her fellow virgins, or the benefit of the poor: yet so, that even while her hands were employed at work, her heart was still with God by recollection and love. Happy should we be, if by the divine grace we copied her example.

Conclude to offer your whole heart and soul to God with all your thoughts, words, and actions. This exercise you cannot repeat too often.

NOVEMBER 22.*The Pharisee and the Publican, (Luke xviii.)*

CONSIDER, first, that our Lord still addresses this parable to all "who trust in themselves as just, and despise others. Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one was a Pha-

risee; the other a Publican. The Pharisee standing prayed thus with himself: O God I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers; as also is this Publican. I fast twice a week: I give tithes of all that I possess. And the Publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven: but struck his breast, saying, O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Consider, secondly, the effect of this humility in the Publican. "This man," says our Lord, "went down to his house justified rather than the other:" for "every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." The Pharisee was full of himself. In his prayer he neither craved mercy nor grace of God: he took himself to be rich and wealthy, and not to stand in need of any thing; whereas indeed, through pride, he was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," (Apoc. iii. 17.) And as he asked for nothing, so he obtained nothing but his own condemnation.

Consider, thirdly, on the other hand, that the prayer of the poor Publican was successful, because it was presented and recommended by a contrite and humble heart. Thus he "went home justified;" while the Pharisee, full of the conceit of his own good works, was rejected for his arrogance. Oh! let us learn of the Publican the great lessons of humility, and of a perfect contrition for our sins: as often as we pray, let us not fail to present to God a contrite and humble heart; and we shall not fail of a happy issue.

Conclude always to be humble and little in your own eyes. "For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble," (James iv. 6.)

NOVEMBER 23.

The grain of mustard seed, [Matt. xiii. 31.]

CONSIDER, first, that in this humble similitude of "the grain of mustard seed" great and divine truths are concealed. "The kingdom of heaven," to which it is likened by our Lord, is taken in the gospel in three different senses; sometimes for God's eternal kingdom, to which the just are invited; (Matth. xxv. 34.) at other times for the church of Christ, in which he reigns for ever as in his kingdom; (Matt. xiii. 47.—xxv. &c.) and also for the "kingdom" of the grace of God in the souls of good christians; (Matt. xiii. 44. 46; Luke xvii. 21.) According to all these acceptations, "the kingdom of heaven" is likened to "a little grain of mustard seed;" because all our good must proceed from humility: we must become "as little

children," (Matt. xviii.) or we shall never attain true happiness either in this world or in the next.

Consider, secondly, how well this "grain of mustard seed" represents the spiritual kingdom of Christ in his church. See its very founder himself in the eyes of the world a poor illiterate man, condemned to a cruel and disgraceful death by public authority. The twelve apostles were utterly destitute of any of those advantages, which might recommend them to the esteem of men; and their doctrines and maxims were most shocking to human pride, and disgusting to the natural inclinations of flesh and blood. In all this we trace the resemblance of the mustard seed—small, mean, inconsiderable, contemptible: but observe how quickly this little grain, thus buried in the earth, sprung up, and became a large tree, which spread its branches far and near, by the wonderful and speedy propagation of the church and kingdom of Christ throughout the earth. Thus does God delight to shew forth his greatness in things which are little.

Consider, thirdly, how expressive also is the grain of mustard seed, of the kingdom of God's grace within our souls. The beginnings are small; the very first foundations must be laid by humility, of which the mustard seed is an emblem. For a contrite and humble heart is absolutely necessary to the establishment of the kingdom of divine grace. This grace must be sown, as it were, and buried in the earth, by serious and frequent reflection. For thus only can the soul be qualified to grow up in all christian virtues, and become herself the kingdom of God, and a kind of heaven upon earth.

Conclude, with a serious resolution, henceforward to seek in earnest this kingdom of heaven, represented by the mustard seed; and all good things shall come together with it.

NOVEMBER 24.

On the parable of the ten virgins, (Matt. xxv.)

CONSIDER, first, that the ten virgins in this parable represent to us the state of christians in this mortal pilgrimage. The lamps with which we are, like them, to go forth to meet Christ, denote the light of faith in all the divine truths of the Christian religion: the oil with which the lamps are nourished, are "the works of faith;" that is, the good works prescribed by the gospel, particularly the good works of mercy and charity, and the love of God above all things: for "faith without good works is dead." Unhappy they, who at the uncertain hour of their departure, for want of these works of faith, find no oil in their lamps!

Consider, secondly, that all christians belong to one of these two companies, under the denomination of "wise" and "foolish virgins." The good are truly *wise*, because they are wise according to God, and in order to eternity. But how truly *foolish* are the wicked and all the children of Babylon, who live in a criminal forgetfulness both of God and eternity? For what greater folly, or rather madness, can there be, than to believe as christians, and live as infidels; to expect to go to heaven by the road which leads to hell: in the neglect of the divine commandments? Ah, my soul, take care thou never be so *foolish*.

Consider, thirdly, that the bridegroom in the parable came in the "middle of the night;" that is, at a time when he was least expected; and he has often signified that he will come like a thief in the night. Not that he desires to surprise us: for if he did, he would not so often warn us: but he desires we should "always watch," and be always ready. "What I say to you," said he to his disciples, "I say to all; WATCH." How happy are those christians who listen to this admonition, always waiting in readiness for the coming of their Lord! But how very miserable are those, who are quite asleep with regard to all the things of God, and awaken only when death opens their eyes, to see their folly when it is too late!

Conclude always to have with you the lamp of faith: but remember too, that this light must be kept in with the oil of good works.

NOVEMBER 25.

On the parable of the talents, [Matth. xxv.]

CONSIDER, first, that our Lord by his ascension is gone into heaven, a far country indeed from this earth on which we dwell. But "ascending on high, he led captivity captive: he gave gifts to men," [Eph. iv. 8.] He has plentifully distributed his goods and talents amongst his servants, that they may by industry improve the stock, during his absence; at the term of which he will return to take an account of their good or bad management of their trust. Christians, have you considered your advantages of soul or body; your fortune, as you call it,—your very time, and other gifts of nature or of grace, as talents entrusted to your care? Have you ever seriously reflected on the strict account you must one day give of them all?

Consider, secondly, how in the parable he that had received the five talents, "went his way and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner, he that had received the two, gained other two. But he that had received the one,

going his way, digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money." The two former are proposed for our imitation—that by the like industry in corresponding with divine grace, and employing in a proper manner all the gifts of God, we may continually advance in virtue, and like these good and faithful servants, improve and double our stock.

Consider, thirdly, that he, who, instead of trading with his Master's money, buried it in the earth, is condemned both as a *slothful* and a *wicked* servant: to teach us not to suffer our talents to lie buried in this unhappy earth of the world and the flesh,—nor to fix our affections upon them, more than upon our God and his divine service,—lest we also, should one day hear thundered out against ourselves that dreadful sentence, "Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Conclude henceforward so to use your talents, or the gifts and graces of God, as to entitle you to this heavenly commendation, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

NOVEMBER 26.

On the parable of the vineyard, (Matth. xxi. 33).

CONSIDER, first, that the householder mentioned in this parable, is GOD himself, and the vineyard which he has planted is his universal church. This church he has fenced in with excellent laws and with his divine protection, as with a "hedge;" digging in it a "wine-press," by the institution of his sacraments, the sources of all heavenly grace, pressed out from the sacred wounds of our Redeemer; and building in it a "tower," thus to fortify it with his extraordinary providence. This vineyard he lets out to husbandmen—that is, to all mankind; for all men have their share in this vineyard, viz. their own souls, at least,—and those of persons under their charge. Having done this, he withdraws into a far country, patiently to wait the fruit we are each of us to furnish in due season.

Consider, secondly, what this great Lord has done for the vineyard of your soul in particular, by numberless favors and graces which he has not granted to thousands. In effect, what is there he ought to do more for his vineyard, that he has not done? And, after all his care, what fruit have you yet produced? Ah, dread what he threatens in the words which follow: "Briars and thorns shall come up, and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it:"—by which is meant that dismal obduracy and hardness of heart, which conducts to final impenitence and everlasting damnation.

Consider, thirdly, how far you have imitated in your own conduct, the unhappy husbandman in the parable; by refusing to render in due season, to the Lord of your vineyard, which is your own soul, the fruits he has so often demanded at your hands by his messengers, that is, by his preachers, by his word, by his inspirations, &c. Have you not persecuted those whom he sent to you, set at naught all who endeavored to bring you to good, and stifled the inspirations of grace? Alas! have you not, by your obstinacy in sin, even crucified again the Son of God!

Conclude, in future, to look well to the vineyard of your soul, lest the kingdom of God be taken away from you, and given to another; and, like the unhappy Jews, figured in this parable, you yourself be brought to an evil end.

NOVEMBER 27.

On our Lord's merciful conduct towards sinners.

CONSIDER, first, that the Scribes and Pharisees were continually objecting to our dear Redeemer, that he suffered "sinners to draw near unto him:"—that "he received sinners, and did eat with them:"—that "he was a friend of publicans and sinners." Unhappy men, who did not understand, that his infinite mercy and charity had brought him down from heaven on purpose to seek and to save sinners! And still more unhappy, in proudly taking themselves to be just and not sinners, and of course rejecting Him "who came not to call the just, but sinners," [Matth. ix. 13.] vainly imagining they had no need of him. Christians, beware of self-conceit and presumption: for the arrogant man "is an abomination to the Lord."

Consider, secondly, the many instances of this merciful disposition of our Lord towards sinners, recorded in the gospel; and his frequent familiar conversation with them: as in the case of Matthew, of Magdalene, of the Samaritan woman, of the woman taken in adultery, of the woman of Canaan, of Zaccheus, and of the thief upon the cross. In a word, he gave continual proofs of his loving kindness and his tender regard for sinners, both in his life, at his death, and after his resurrection.

Consider, thirdly, other strong evidences of this truth, in the gospel parables of the "good shepherd," [Luke xv.] and of the charitable Samaritan, [Luke x.] and in that of the prodigal son returning to his injured parent, [Luke xv.] In all which you may behold a lovely image of that tender mercy and goodness, which your Redeemer has so often exercised, and continues daily to exercise, in favor of unhappy sinners. For them,

in effect, he has shed even the last drop of his sacred blood !

Conclude no longer to slight his goodness, but instantly to turn away from sin.

NOVEMBER 28.

On the conversion of Zaccheus.

CONSIDER, first, that Zaccheus "was the chief of the publicans; and he was rich : and he sought to see Jesus who he was, and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature. And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see him; for he was to pass that way." Good desires are the beginnings of virtue; they incline us to seek to see Jesus by true wisdom. But as we are all sinners, and "low of stature" through our proneness to vice, we must with Zaccheus get above the crowd of our disorderly affections and tumultuous passions, and climb up the sycamore, by treading under foot the false maxims of worldly wisdom, and by climbing the tree of the cross; for this is the way by which Jesus passes.

Consider, secondly, that our Lord, to reward the pious eagerness of this publican, bids him to make haste and come down, and tells him he will be his guest; and he brings along with him salvation into his house. Zaccheus instantly obeys the summons, "and receives him with joy." Let us also, make haste to obey the calls of divine grace, and accept with joy the visit, with which our Lord is pleased to favor us by his inspirations. Thus he will bring salvation into our house.

Consider, thirdly, that Zaccheus on this occasion, gave up all his worldly riches, which were so near his heart, to be employed either in alms, or in making restitution fourfold for all ill-gotten goods. He laid down all his sins at the feet of his Saviour, with a sincere detestation of them all, and a firm resolution no more to return to them. This was the most agreeable feast he could make for our Lord, who declared upon the spot, that "salvation was this day come to that house."

Conclude to adopt this conversion of Zaccheus as the model of your own; and strive to imitate it in every particular.

NOVEMBER 29.

Christ weeping over Jerusalem, [Luke xix.]

CONSIDER, first, that our dear Lord upon his last visit to Jerusalem, is attended with crowds of people bearing palm-

branches in their hands, and hailing him with hosannas of joy. But his attention is engaged by the melancholy object before him,—of that unhappy city, and the evils soon to overwhelm it. Not that the beating down of stone walls, or the destroying of houses, was a matter worthy the tears of the Son of God: nor yet, that mortals should die a little before their time: the miseries which he lamented were those of the soul; namely, the spiritual blindness and obduracy of this people; their extreme ingratitude, and their final reprobation and damnation, in consequence of their wilful resistance of his calls and graces. Christians, let us not by our obstinacy in sin, provoke the like judgments.

Consider, secondly, that we have at present “our days,” as Jerusalem had then. A day of mercy and grace, in which we have all kinds of helps for our salvation. What use do we make of this “our day?” For it is short, and soon must end; and “the day of the Lord” will succeed. Have you, O christian, a right sense and “knowledge, in this your day, of the things that are for your peace?” Do the things of God and eternity make a due impression on your soul? Or are not these great truths, through your own fault, “hidden from your eyes?” Ah! if you neglect this day of your visitation, as Jerusalem did, “the days will come upon” you also, when your spiritual “enemies will beat you flat to the ground,—when the sorrows of death shall encompass you, and the perils of hell shall find you.”

Consider, thirdly, that our Saviour after this, “entering into the temple, began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought: saying to them, it is written, my house is a house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves, [Luke xix. 45.] Intimating by this action, that the profanation of the house of God, and of sacred things, with the neglect of prayer and other religious duties, and the love of gain more than of godliness, is the high road to an eternal reprobation.

Conclude to take warning from the example before you, not to neglect the time “of your visitation;” lest on the sudden you “fall into the hands of the living God.”

NOVEMBER 30.

On St. Andrew.

CONSIDER, first, that “it is good for a man, when he has borne the yoke from his youth,” [Lament. iii. 27.] and that “a young man according to his way, even when he is old, will not depart from it,” [Prov. xxii. 6.] This truth was exemplified in St. Andrew. Before he came to Christ, he was trained

up in piety by the great forerunner of our Lord. The Baptist, who sought not his own honor and glory, but the spiritual advantage of his disciples, directed them to Jesus. St. Andrew and another heard him say of our Lord, "behold the Lamb of God." Whereupon they attended him to the place of his abode, and staid with him that day. Thus they enjoyed the happiness of his divine conversation,

Consider, secondly, that St. Andrew having now found Jesus, and relished his heavenly doctrines, forthwith conducted to him his brother Simon. Thus should every christian endeavor to bring as many as he can to the saving knowledge of Christ, and to the practice of holiness. But though the two brothers began now to be acquainted with our Lord, and to believe in him, they did not yet leave all to follow him, till upon another occasion he said to them, [Matth. iv. 18.] "come after me and I will make you to be fishers of men; and they, immediately leaving their nets, followed him." Learn of them a ready correspondence with divine grace, even should it call upon you to leave all you possess to follow Christ, much more when the sacrifice is far easier.

Consider, thirdly, that St. Andrew, after a life of apostolical labors and sufferings, imitated his divine Master even to the dying upon a cross. The acts of his martyrdom relate, that being now within sight of the happy instrument which was to send him to his God, he exclaimed: "O good cross, which hast received beauty and glory by bearing the body of my Lord, take me away from among mortals, and conduct me to my Master, who by dying upon thee, effected my redemption." Christians, what are your dispositions with regard to the cross prepared for you? Without it, we cannot make our way to heaven: if we wish to reign with Christ, we must like St Andrew be content to suffer with Christ, whatever God ordains.

Conclude to imitate St. Andrew's virtues, particularly his great fidelity, and that love for his divine Master, which was stronger even than death.

DECEMBER 1.

On the time of advent.

CONSIDER, first, that *advent* is a time of penance and devotion, during which we are daily admonished by the church "to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make straight his paths," by entering into the like dispositions which the Baptist required of the people, to prepare them for their Messiah. *Advent* signifies "the coming:" and we are now taught to embrace in such manner the mercy and grace, which our Lord brings with

him at his first *coming* amongst us in his incarnation, as to escape those dreadful judgments, which his justice will execute upon impenitent sinners, at his second *coming* to judge the living and the dead.

Consider, secondly, in what manner we must now dispose ourselves for the spiritual birth of Christ within our souls, at the approaching solemnity of Christmas. "Knowing the time," says the apostle; "that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep: for now our salvation is nearer, than when we first believed. The night is past, [or far spent] the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light: let us walk decently as in the day," &c. Ah! christians, listen seriously to this summons, and shake off, once for all, that unhappy lethargy which keeps you fast asleep to the things of God.

Consider, thirdly, that the terrors of the great accounting day are set before our eyes at this time, to induce us to make good use of the mercy now offered. "If" then "this day you hear the voice of the Lord," either sweetly inviting you by his tender clemency, or terrifying you by the thunder of his justice, "harden not your hearts." Sleep no longer, for fear you sleep in death, like those of old who by their obstinacy so far provoked Almighty God, that "he swore to them in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest."

Conclude, in earnest, to prepare the way of the Lord, by putting away all your sins and purifying your soul. Thus he will come and abide with you.

DECEMBER 2.

How to prepare the way of the Lord.

CONSIDER, first, that St. John the Baptist, the great forerunner of our Lord, continually called upon the people to turn from their evil ways, and "do penance: because the kingdom of heaven was at hand." He told them that they must "bring forth worthy fruits of penance," if they would "escape the wrath to come;" and this without delay; for that "the axe was laid at the root of the tree;" and "every tree that did not bring forth good fruit, should be cut down and cast into the fire." The church still continues to repeat to all her children, especially at this holy time, these most important lessons of the Baptist.

Consider, secondly, that the virtue of *penance* which St. John enforced, always was, and always will be, absolutely necessary in the conversion of a sinner: and it implies three things. First, the renouncing and detesting of all our sins, by

which we have offended our good God : secondly, a turning to God with our whole heart, and an offering of ourselves to him for time and eternity : thirdly, a resolution of satisfying, according to our small ability, for past offences, by a penitential life. Christians, this must be our great business at this holy time, if we hope to prepare ourselves for Christ.

Consider, thirdly, that the church, in celebrating the divine mysteries three times over on Christmas-day, commemorates three different births of Christ : his *eternal* birth, from his heavenly Father; his *temporal* birth, from his virgin mother; and his *spiritual* birth by grace, in the souls of the faithful. The best devotion for the time of Christmas, is that which conduces most towards this spiritual birth of Christ within our souls; and, of course, the best devotion for advent is—1. to purify them from sin : 2. to adorn them with virtue : 3. to invite our Lord to take possession of them, by daily fervent prayer.

Conclude to practice these lessons, to the best of your power. An advent thus spent will bring you a happy Christmas.

DECEMBER 3.

On the miracles of Christ our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, that the miracles of Christ were wrought, not only to confirm our faith and hope in him, but likewise to direct our practice. For as the diseases and corporal infirmities of this life, mystically represent the spiritual disorders of our vices and passions; so we are taught by our Saviour's miracles in healing all kinds of bodily indispositions, to apply to him for the cure of the infirmities of the soul. These are the far more grievous evils of the two, and if not healed, are attended with far more dreadful consequences.

Consider, secondly, how our blessed Saviour "went about all Galilee," says St. Matthew, [iv. 23.] "healing all manner of sickness, and every infirmity among the people; and his fame went throughout all Syria. And there came to him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others; and they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them," [Matth. xv. 30.] "And all the multitude sought to touch him; for virtue went out from him, and healed all," [Luke vi. 19.] Be assured he is no less able or willing now to heal our souls, provided we apply to him with an humble confidence and earnest prayer.

Consider, thirdly, that as Christ came to deliver men from the tyranny and slavery of the devil, his miracles shone forth principally in casting out evil spirits, in destroying the works

of the devil, and in expelling Satan from his usurped dominions. Alas! does not this most wicked one spiritually possess thousands of christians, by means of some or other of the capital vices? Does he not render many spiritually *deaf* and *dumb*, with regard to the confession of their sins, and the calls and inspirations of divine grace? Does he not bend them down to the earth by worldly affections, like the crooked woman in the gospel? In these cases we must seek redress from Christ by humble prayer.

Conclude to study well the practical lessons, which may be learned from the miracles of our Lord, as well as the motives they afford for strengthening your faith and hope.

DECEMBER 4.

Our Lord cleanses the lepers.

CONSIDER, first, that the leprosy is a figure of sin; and the prescriptions concerning it, in the book of Leviticus, were all figurative, and expressive of what was to be done under the new law, for the cure of this spiritual leprosy. The first mentioned to have been cleansed by our Lord, "worshipped him, saying,—Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed," [Matth. viii. 2, 3.] We see in this instance, that faith and humility are very efficacious with our heavenly physician. In the case of legal defilement, the leper, by the judgment of the priest, was separated from the rest of the faithful, and was not to expect a cure without the most humble dispositions, and an exact compliance with the ceremonies prescribed: much more are the same dispositions requisite for the healing of the dreadful leprosy of sin.

Consider, secondly, that our Lord having cleansed the leper, to teach us to avoid all ostentation and vain glory in doing good, said to him: "see thou tell no man; but go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded." Thus giving us to understand, that even when by the grace of a perfect contrition he cleanses souls from the leprosy of sin, he still expects they will show themselves to his priests, by a sincere confession of their sins; in consequence of his divine law, by which he has given to his priests the inspection and judgment of the leprosy of the soul, with the power of *binding* and *loosing*, *forgiving* and *retaining* sins, and the dispensation of all his mysteries and sacraments.

Consider, thirdly, how our Lord also cured ten other lepers, [Luke xvii.] who applied to him with the like dispositions of faith and humility. These, too, he referred to his priests. But out of the ten who received the benefit of a cure, only one re-

turned to glorify God, and give thanks to our merciful Redeemer:—the rest ungratefully forgot their benefactor—like many christians, who appear quite insensible of the favor of reconciliation, and are thus in danger of a worse relapse even than before!

Conclude to dread and detest the spiritual leprosy of sin, more than any other evil; and seek your cure with proper dispositions.

DECEMBER 5.

Our Lord stills the storm and feeds the multitude.

CONSIDER, first, that in the voyage of this mortal life, frequent storms assail sometimes the whole church, as in cases of grievous persecutions, heresies, or other more general evils; at other times endanger particulars by temptations and tribulations, from which, more or less, none can expect to be exempted, in the midst of the boisterous ocean of this world. But we have Christ on board with us, and have nothing to fear, provided we apply to him, like the apostles, with a lively faith and confidence. Though he often seems to sleep, for a trial of our faith, and makes us more earnest in our prayers, he will not fail in his good time to command the winds and the sea, and restore a calm.

Consider, secondly, that our blessed Lord in feeding at one time five thousand men with five loaves, and at another four thousand with seven, has taught us himself, in the first instance, [John vi.] that we are not to seek or follow him for the sake of "the loaves," that is, for a corporal livelihood or any temporal advantages; "but for that," saith he, "which endureth unto everlasting life, which the son of man will give you." Therefore, from his feeding the multitudes, we must learn to have recourse to him for the food and nourishment of our souls unto everlasting life: for he is the living and life; giving bread, which he plentifully distributes in the holy sacrament to all worthy receivers.

Consider, thirdly, that the people favored with these miracles, had preferred the attending upon Christ and his divine word, before all other occupations; they had continued with him in the desert for three whole days, without nourishment. Hence our Lord, after feeding their souls with the word of life, and healing their infirmities, also provided for their corporal sustenance; according to his promise, (Matt. vi. 33.) "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice; and all these things," (namely, meat, drink, and clothes, as far as is expedient,) "shall be added to you."

Conclude to follow Christ into the wilderness by a spirit of recollection; and he will feed your soul with his hidden manna, to strengthen you on your way to heaven.

DECEMBER 6.

On other miracles of our Lord.

CONSIDER, first, how the woman that had been afflicted during twelve years with the issue of blood, humbly touched the hem of our Lord's garment in the midst of a crowd, was instantly healed, in reward of her faith, as he himself declares, (Luke viii. 48.) The centurion by a like faith and humility obtained the immediate cure of his servant, (Matt. viii.) and the woman of Canaan that of her daughter, (Matt. xv. 28.) Others, without speaking, by the silent eloquence of their humility have obtained their cure; for instance, the man sick of the dropsy, (Luke xiv.)

Consider, secondly, in the case of the paralytic, (Matt. ix. Luke v.) that the sick man's friends not being able for the crowd to present him before Jesus, uncovered * the roof of the house where our Lord was teaching, and let him down by ropes as he lay in his bed, into the midst of them. Imitate the great faith, and the earnestness of the paralytic and his friends to obtain the cure of his complaint. O why will you not be much more solicitous for the health and welfare of your immortal souls, than for that of your bodies which soon must be the food of worms!

Consider, thirdly, that our blessed Saviour, to show us that our corporal infirmities are often the effects of sin; first said to the sick man: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Hence, our first care when visited with sickness, should be to apply for the remission of our sins by repentance and confession; and then we may hope the scourge will be removed, when thus we have removed the cause. The Scribes and Pharisees, from these words of our Lord, inwardly condemned him as a blasphemer. But He who knew their secret thoughts, confuted them by an evident miracle: "arise," saith he, "take up thy bed, and go into thy house:" upon which the paralytic "immediately rising up before them, took up the bed on which he lay, and went away to his own house glorifying God!"

Conclude to spare no pains in order to come to Christ; and seek the cure of your spiritual diseases by a lively faith and true humility.

* The tops of the houses in Palestine were flat, and had a flight of steps to them at the outside, for the convenience of taking the air.

DECEMBER 7.

Our Lord cures the blind, and raises the dead to life.

CONSIDER, first, that our Lord gave sight to him that was born blind, (John ix.) by spreading clay upon his eyes, and ordering him to wash in the pool of Siloe. The blind men of Jericho also obtained of him their cure, by their unwearied importunity for mercy. Let us imitate them, and not be discouraged by the crowd of distractions which *rebuke* us as it were, and seek to stop our mouths; and our Lord will not fail to crown our perseverance with the desired success.

Consider, secondly, that the first of the three persons mentioned in scripture to have been raised to life by our blessed Saviour, was but just dead. Her he restored with two words, *Talitha cumi*. GIRL, ARISE! The second was carried out in order to burial; and for him something more was done: for our Lord came near and touched the bier, and stopping the bearers, said to the deceased, "Young man, I say to thee, arise: and he that was dead, sat up and began to speak," &c. But before our Lord restored Lazarus, who had been dead and buried four days, we read (John xi.) that he "groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself; that he lifted up his eyes to heaven," and prayed to his Father; and then "cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth!*"

Consider, thirdly, that the first of these dead represents those, who having just fallen, have immediate recourse to God by repentance: the second represents those, who by repeated sinful acts are already laid upon the bier, and are carried towards the sepulchre of some evil habit. But Lazarus represents the more dismal condition of inveterate habitual sinners, who require still more extraordinary graces, signified by the prayers and tears of the Son of God. Ah! let us dread the death of sin above all other evils, but much more the being buried in the grave of sinful habits, from which we shall not be raised again without a greater miracle, than even that which called Lazarus from his monument. However, to encourage us to pray and moan for poor sinners dead and buried in sin, our Lord was pleased, in the two last instances, to be moved by the tears of the living, to compassionate the dead.

Conclude, with confidence, to have recourse to the tender mercy of your Redeemer, both for yourself and your neighbor. You cannot do Him a greater pleasure, nor yourself a greater service.

DECEMBER 8.

The conception of the blessed Virgin.

CONSIDER, first, that the infinite goodness of God, out of pure pity and compassion, was pleased to decree, that his own eternal Son should come down from heaven to be our Saviour; to redeem us who were lost by the sin of our first parents, from the slavery of Satan, with his most precious blood; and by his death to open to us the gates of everlasting life. O christians, let us never forget this infinite charity of our God.

Consider, secondly, that when the time of his coming drew near, the eternal Father, who had from the very beginning promised this Redeemer to our first parents, and often afterwards to the patriarchs and prophets, and others his servants, shewed the most extraordinary favors to HER who was to bring forth the Lord of glory and the Saviour of the world. These great things, wrought for her even in her conception, we celebrate in the festival of this day. Our Lord in taking her for his mother, and us for his brethren, has authorised us to consider her as our mother also, and to rejoice in all her advantages. We cannot therefore, love the Son of God, and neglect the honor of his blessed mother.

Consider, thirdly, that as the blessed Virgin bore in her womb, and brought forth into the world, *purity* itself; so she herself was never defiled with the least spot or stain of sin. Learn from her example carefully to preserve your body and soul in perfect *purity*, if you hope to be agreeable in the sight of God. Learn to *purify* yourself from all sin, whenever you approach the sacred mysteries; and more particularly at the great solemnity of the Birth of Christ.

Conclude to honor the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin, by an imitation of her purity as far as your frailty will admit: thus will your Lord be spiritually born in you.

DECEMBER 9.

How we must prepare ourselves for Christ.

CONSIDER, first, that in order to make us happy, Christ must be spiritually born in our souls. To this end, we must be clean of heart: for though he humbled himself so far as to be born in a poor stable, he will not be born in a soul defiled with sin. Such a soul is the habitation of unclean spirits: and therefore cannot be a fit place for the spiritual birth of Christ; without which his coming will be to our condemnation.

Consider, secondly, that the first and most essential branch

of christian purity and cleanness of heart, is a purity of conscience, at least from mortal sin, with a fixed determination of the soul, for no fear, no love, no human respect; in a word, for nothing that the world can give or take away, ever to consent, though only in thought, to any such sin. Without this disposition Christ cannot be spiritually born in us.

Consider, thirdly, that a generous christian does not stop here. A true lover of his God does not inquire, whether the doing of this or that will send his soul to hell. It is enough to determine him to avoid it with all his power, to know that it offends Almighty God, whom he loves with his whole heart; and therefore he dreads more the doing of any thing displeasing in his eyes, than any evil whatever. My soul, are these thy dispositions?

Conclude now at least to acquire this perfect purity of conscience, not only from all deadly sin, but also from all known deliberate venial sins, especially when habitual; if you wish the God of purity to fix his residence within your soul.

DECEMBER 10.

On purifying the interior powers of the soul.

CONSIDER, first, that as the spiritual conception and birth of Christ must be perfected in our interior, we must keep our inward powers orderly: first, by purifying our *understanding* from all its errors, false opinions and affected ignorances, obliging it to open its eyes to divine truths in the exercise of meditation and mental prayer: second, by purifying our *memory* from all its impertinences and distractions, in order to attend to the presence of God: third, by purifying our *will* from all disorderly affections, to give it to our sovereign good which is God himself. Thus shall our whole soul be agreeable to him.

Consider secondly, that one of the greatest enemies to this inward purity so necessary to bring Christ into our soul, and to fix him there, is that unhappy disposition of mind, in which many christians pass their days; always thinking, but very seldom to the purpose: so that, when God would come and would visit them, they are not at home; their whole attention is fixed on something else. If this be your case, seek a remedy without delay, by a close attention to God in all your ordinary actions and employments. Thus you will prepare a place for Christ.

Consider, thirdly, that the purity of the mind and of the thought, must be maintained by the purity of the affection, and of the heart: for we think most upon what we love most; and therefore if the affections of our heart are *impure*, our thoughts

also will be *impure*; for where our treasure is, there both our hearts and our thoughts will be. Now that love is *pure*, which makes God its *treasure*; and all such affections are *impure*, as take off the heart from God, and make it seek its *treasure* in something else; which at least divides the heart between God and the creature. These must be banished in order to dispose the soul for God.

Conclude to avoid dissipation of thought and all disorderly affections. They bring such company into the soul, as the Son of God will not endure.

DECEMBER 11.

On the purity of our actions.

CONSIDER, first, that the purity required in us to prepare the way for Christ, ought also to extend to the whole body of our actions. But that on which the purity of our actions chiefly depends, is the purity of our intention, (Matt. vi. 22, 23.) "If the eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome: but if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome." For the eye of the soul is the intention; which is then single, when the view of the soul is directed towards God in all she does: but when the intention, though in a single vicious circumstance, is turned off from God to something else, the eye is evil and the work is *darksome*.

Consider, secondly, that by this purity of intention the very meanest of our actions are ennobled; and without it the best are good for nothing in the sight of God. To practice this virtue, we must in the first place begin all our days and all our works by offering them all up to God and his divine service: second, we must consult in all things his will, and make it the rule of all we do: third, we must constantly watch over ourselves, in order to exclude all by-motives of self-love, human respect or pleasure: fourth, we must often renew our intention, and season all our actions with frequent aspirations of divine love.

Consider, thirdly, that vain glory and pride are the capital enemies of this purity of intention. Vain glory causes persons ever to turn their eyes upon what others may say or think of their actions, and to court the esteem, reputation, and approbation of the world; while pride makes them full of themselves and their own excellency and sufficiency, and prefer themselves to others. Both of them are infinitely pernicious to the soul, and even pervert the very best of our actions to our eternal ruin.

Conclude in all your actions to purify your intention from

pride and vain glory, and from every thing else which may turn your heart from God. Let Him be the beginning and end of all you do.

DECEMBER 12.

On the angelical salutation.

CONSIDER, first, that the time appointed by our Lord being now come, the archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven to the blessed Virgin Mary, upon the most solemn embassy that ever was; namely, to treat with this most humble maid, concerning the incarnation of the eternal Word, and the redemption of mankind from sin and hell. "Being come in, he said to her: Hail full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women," (Luke i. 28.) O let heaven and earth join their acclamations, in thanksgiving for the infinite blessings derived upon lost man, through the incarnation of the Son of God, in the chaste womb of this most holy Virgin.

Consider, secondly, that many saints have been "full of grace;" but none like this queen of all the saints, whose grace was proportioned to the great designs of the Almighty in her favor, and to the supereminent dignity to which she was destined, of being the mother of God. Do you rejoice with the blessed Virgin, for this her "fullness of grace:" it increased continually during her whole life, by the good use she continually made of all the gifts of God. Beg her intercession, that you also may faithfully correspond with the divine grace.

Consider thirdly, that the angel adds in his salutation, "the Lord is with thee;" to signify the source whence all her fullness of grace flowed, and the extraordinary privileges communicated to this most favored of God's creatures. For our Lord was with the blessed Virgin, not only by his essence, his presence, and his power, as he is with all men; not only by his sanctifying grace, as with all the just: but in an unconceivable manner, by a far more eminent grace and higher sanctification: whence the angel says, "blessed art thou amongst women," and St. Elizabeth adds: "blessed is the fruit of thy womb," (Luke i. 42.) to make us more sensible of her most wonderful dignity, and of the benefits which we enjoy through her blessed conception.

Conclude frequently to repeat the angelic salutation, together with the pious address of the church: Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and the hour of our death—Amen. Her intercession will be of infinite advantage to us at that awful moment.

DECEMBER 13.

The wonders of God, in the incarnation of his Son.

CONSIDER, first, that the blessed Virgin, having offered herself with profound humility to the sacred will of God, by those words: "behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word," (Luke i. 38.) the greatest of all miracles was instantly accomplished. A human body, perfect in all its parts, was that moment formed by the Holy Ghost of her purest blood; and at the same time a most excellent rational soul was created: and this body and soul were assumed and united to the eternal Word, the second person of the most adorable Trinity. Thus God was made man, and man God; and the blessed Virgin was made mother of God. Thus were we all exalted to a kindred with the Most High; who by taking to himself our nature, has made us all his brothers and sisters, and in some measure, partakers of his divinity.

Consider, secondly, that God did not give to this his Son, "his spirit by measure," (John iii. 34.) as to his saints; but delivered all things into his hands: and "of his fullness we all receive," (John i. 16.) "according to the measure of his giving," (Eph. iv. 7.) He is the Holy of holies, the Saint of saints, the never failing source of all grace and blessings to us who are his members, and to his mystical body the church; of which he is the perpetual head and glorious spouse for evermore.

Consider, thirdly, how the words of the prophet Isaiah, (ix. 6.) were verified in the incarnation. "A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace." Yes, christians; he is your wonderful deliverer, your mighty advocate, your Father, and the author of your everlasting *peace*; in a word, your God and your all.

Conclude to honor, by a lively faith and frequent meditation, all the wonders wrought in the incarnation of the Son of God; and to lead henceforward a life worthy the dignity to which you are now exalted.

DECEMBER 14.

On the glory of God in the incarnation of his Son.

CONSIDER, first, that the Almighty power of God shines forth in a glorious manner in the wonders wrought in the incarnation, especially in that most glorious of all his wonder-

ful productions, namely, a *God-man*;—a greater work without comparison, than the creation of ten thousand worlds. His infinite wisdom evidently appears, in this admirable invention to unite in the same person God and man, the Creator and the creature,—hitherto at an immense distance from each other; thus rendering to the Deity a homage of adoration, praise, and love, infinitely more glorious, than the homage of ten thousand worlds, though full of angels and men eternally employed in glorifying God.

Consider, secondly, the infinite goodness of God in this mystery, by which he has given his only Son to be our Saviour and great Deliverer, and to make us happy for eternity. His infinite mercy here shines forth in a wonderful manner, in sending us so great a Redeemer, out of pure compassion for our miseries, and without any regard to our deserts,—to be both our priest and our sacrifice, and to atone for our sins. The divine justice too, is no less conspicuous in the incarnation of the Son of God, since it required a satisfaction for sin, which nothing but the precious blood of our divine Redeemer could discharge. No punishment to be inflicted in time or eternity for the sins of men, could demonstrate more clearly the dreadful rigor of divine justice than such an atonement.

Consider, thirdly, how very much the incarnation of the Son of God, by reason of the infinite dignity of this God-man, has advanced the glory of his Father; since every motion of his heart gives, in effect, infinitely more glory to the Father, both in time and eternity, than all the adorations and praises of millions of angels. Besides all that glory which the Son of God incarnate has procured for his Father, by his gospel, his worship established among men,—the great sacrifice of his body and blood, offered daily on a million of altars,—and that kingdom of souls, which he has purchased from among the children of men, in order to glorify him for ever.

Conclude to join the angels in hymns of perpetual praise to God, for having so wonderfully reconciled together in this mystery his own glory, with your peace and salvation.

DECEMBER 15.

On the glory which the Son of God, from the first instant of his conception, gave to his Father.

CONSIDER, first, that the soul of Christ being assumed to the divine person of the Word, was, from the moment of his incarnation, full of light and knowledge, and consequently enjoyed from the beginning the perfect use of reason and understanding. Now, as the great design of God in this mystery

was his own glory and the redemption of man, so the continual occupation of the Son God made man, was the procuring of the Father's glory and man's salvation.

Consider, secondly, that according to the Psalmist, (Psalm xxxix. 7, 8, 9.) he began by offering himself to his Father without reserve, "to do all his will." This will he embraced in the midst of his heart; to be the great "burnt-offering" and "sin-offering" immolated for the expiation of all our guilt;—a perpetual servant, obedient "unto death, even the death of the cross. Sacrifice and oblation," says he to his eternal Father, "thou didst not desire. Then, said I, Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and thy law in the midst of my heart." Christians, let us endeavor to imitate these dispositions of our divine model.

Consider, thirdly, what *adoration* and *homage* he, as man, continually paid to God; bowing down all the powers of his soul, to offer him a most acceptable worship, worthy of his divine majesty. Second, what acts of *praise* and *thanksgiving* he offered up, both for himself and for the whole creation. Third, how, by acts of *oblation* and eternal *dedication* of himself to his Father, he consecrated his whole soul and body to be for ever his,—in life and death, in time and eternity,—and to promote in all things, and above all things, the sanctification of his holy name, and the establishment of his spiritual kingdom, over the whole earth.

Conclude to learn of him these great lessons in the practice of your life. Nothing can be more agreeable to God, or more advantageous to yourself.

DECEMBER 16.

The charity of our Lord towards us from his first conception.

CONSIDER, first, that the soul of our blessed Redeemer, the instant it received a being, was assumed to the divine Person of the Word; and, in the light of this eternal Word, clearly saw and lovingly embraced that most sacred and adorable decree of the whole blessed Trinity, by which the Son of God was to be made man, for the reparation of the divine honor and glory, injured by our sins; and was to be the Saviour and Redeemer of all mankind, by cancelling all their sins with his most precious blood, opening heaven in their favor, and becoming the great Mediator of God and men, their high-priest, and their sacrifice. In obedience to this heavenly decree he exercised himself from the first moment of his conception, in such

acts of charity for us, as were most agreeable to this his office of our Saviour and Redeemer, with a constant reference to his Father's glory.

Consider secondly, what in particular these acts of charity were—1. He had us always before his eyes, and in the midst of his heart. 2. He prayed incessantly, that we might be delivered from all our evils, and be brought through him, to all good. 3. He had a most tender compassion for all our miseries, considering us all as his brethren. 4. He offered himself with unremitting ardor to the justice of his Father, to suffer whatever he pleased, for the expiation of our sins. See then, my soul, how affectionately and effectually too, thy Saviour has loved thee from the instant of his conception; and learn to return him love for love.

Consider, thirdly, that our blessed Redeemer was no sooner conceived, than he entered his career of sufferings, occasioned by the lively and comprehensive knowledge of all the crimes, from the first to the last of mankind,—with all their dreadful consequences in time and eternity, notwithstanding his sincere desire to save them,—through their criminal abuse of his infinite mercy and goodness. His horror and hatred for our sins, was equal to the love he bore his heavenly Father; and his grief and anguish was equal to his love for us, even that love which nailed him to the cross!

Conclude to embrace the divine charity of the Son of God, with all the affection of your soul; and offer him your whole heart in return for this his boundless love.

DECEMBER 17.

On benefits derived to us through the incarnation.

CONSIDER, first, that man, highly favored by God in his first creation, and elevated to a supernatural end, by sin was suddenly deprived of all the blessings of grace. His understanding was overclouded with ignorance, and deluded with a variety of errors; his memory and imagination were distracted with phantoms and mere vanities; his will was perverted with malice; and his whole soul became weak beyond expression, to everything of good, and strongly bent upon evil. Thus unhappy man, in losing his God had lost his all, and had fallen into the hands of four merciless enemies, Sin and Satan, Death and Hell.

Consider, secondly, that the Son of God coming amongst us by his incarnation, brought us from heaven effectual remedies against these desperate evils. He came in quality of our *teacher*, of our *lawgiver*, and our great *apostle*, declaring to

us the whole will of God. He brought light to us, who heretofore "were sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death." He brought with him our ransom to redeem us from sin and Satan. He was "sent to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," even the great jubilee of a general remission of all our debts. In a word, he came "to lead us into the right way," to conduct us to our true country, "to break our bonds in sunder," to raise us up from death to life!

Consider, thirdly, that all these graces and benefits, however great and excellent, will not save us without our consent and concurrence, and a due correspondence on our part, by faith and obedience. For what will it avail us to have the light come down from heaven to shine upon us, if we shut our eyes against it, and follow darkness rather than the light? Or what better shall we be for the *ransom* offered by our Redeemer in our favor, if we prefer our slavery and our chains before the liberty of the children of God? Rather, will not our case, by our obstinacy and ingratitude, become much worse?

Conclude, henceforward faithfully to correspond with the infinite goodness of your dear Redeemer; and thus show yourself to be a true follower of Him, who is himself the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.

DECEMBER 18.

Other benefits of our Redemption.

CONSIDER, first, that "as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death;" and thus both sin and death were entailed upon all men—so justice and grace entered into this world by one man, in order to our eternal life. Hence the Son of God, in quality of our *Father*, imparts to us a new generation, a second birth,—by which we, who naturally are "children of wrath," corrupted by sin, and liable to eternal death, in consequence of our birth from Adam, are born again by grace, and cleansed from sin with his blood, and are made children of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. In quality of our *Head*, he communicates to us all kinds of graces, derived in virtue of his merits, upon all the members of his mystical body (the church) who adhere to him by faith and obedience: (John xv.)

Consider, secondly, the other near relations marked down in the word of God, which our Lord has been pleased we should have with him; for instance, that of our being now his "brethren:"—"I will declare thy name," says he, (Ps. xxi.)

"to my brethréen." A relationship which gives us an honor not granted to the angels, of being near akin even by consanguinity to the Son of God : for he never took upon himself the nature of the angels, as he did the nature of man. He is our elder brother, "the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. vii. 29.) and in quality of our elder brother, he is also our high-priest, [for anciently, under the law of nature, the first-born were priests] to officiate for us "in all things that appertain to God, (Heb. v. 1.:) also our prince, our leader and captain in our warfare for a heavenly kingdom.

Consider, thirdly, that of all the relations we bear to the Son of God, none is more endearing than that of *spouse*. For the church is "the bride of the Lamb," brought out of his side while in the deep sleep of death upon the cross, as Eve was from the side of Adam; and she is espoused to him by an everlasting and inviolable contract, of which christian matrimony is the sacred and mysterious sign; and every particular soul in the state of grace, partakes in the dignity and happiness of this near and dear relation of spouse to the Lamb of God, and ought to be "one spirit" with Christ.

Conclude to behave, in your whole life and conversation, agreeably in all respects, to these sacred relations with the Son of God.

DECEMBER 19.

On our Saviour as our king, and our priest.

CONSIDER, first, that our blessed Saviour is our true "Melchisedec;" sovereign king and high-priest forever:—he is truly "the king of justice, and the king of peace," of whose reign there shall be no end. He came by his incarnation to dethrone the usurper Satan, and to establish amongst us the kingdom of his grace, by which he will reign in the souls of his true subjects for ever and ever, and even make them kings and priests to his eternal Father, (Apoc. i. 6.) Of him the royal prophet sings, (Ps. lxxi.) "All the kings of the earth shall adore him; all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the poor from the mighty—he shall save the souls of the poor."

Consider, secondly, that the Son of God, becoming man by his incarnation, was called by his heavenly Father, and anointed by the Holy Spirit, to the office of high-priest, to execute every branch of it for the glory of God, and in behalf of us men. This he did "in the days of his flesh," that is, during his mortal life, "by offering up prayers and supplications, with a strong cry and tears," (Heb. v. 7.) this he did in death by the great sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world, which he

then offered upon the altar of the cross. This he still continues to do in the sanctuary of heaven, by there presenting the blood of his sacrifice before the throne of his Father, and with it he continually "intercedes" in our behalf.

Consider, thirdly, that we are indebted to our great high-priest and his priesthood, not only for all these blessings, which he himself in person has at any time bestowed upon mankind; but also for the numberless graces and benefits, which he daily confers upon us, by the ministry of men commissioned by him to preach his gospel, administer his sacraments, *remit sins* in his name, impart the grace of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands; and to consecrate and offer up daily in his name his sacred body and blood, for all the great ends of sacrifice. In all these offices our Lord assists as our high-priest; and whatever grace is here given to the faithful, is all derived from his priesthood; and, in them all, he himself is the principal actor.

Conclude, to beg daily of your dear Redeemer, to establish his reign within your soul, and, by his priesthood, deliver you from your sins, and present you to his heavenly Father.

DECEMBER 20.

On our Saviour as our sacrifice

CONSIDER, first, how insignificant in itself, (independently of that sacrifice to come, of which the sacrifices of the old law were only figures) was all that homage, adoration and thanksgiving, paid to the infinite majesty of God, by the oblation of oxen, goats or sheep. How much less "could the blood of oxen, or of sheep, take away sins," and be a proper atonement for the great sin of the world, by which man had forfeited the grace of God? Therefore, the Son of God by his incarnation substituted himself as our sacrifice, to supply in a most perfect manner all the intents of burnt-offerings, sin-offerings and peace-offerings; and to wash away all our guilt with his own most precious blood.

Consider, secondly, that in dying for us upon the cross, the Son of God has made himself a "holocaust" or "burnt-offering" for us, of most sweet savor to his heavenly Father: a sacrifice of homage and praise, worthy the infinite majesty of God; because of the infinite dignity both of the offerer and of the offering. On this occasion he offered a *thanksgiving* for himself and us, of infinite value: a perfect *peace-offering*—to purchase peace and all happiness for men; and particularly a *sin-offering* for us all: a "victim of propitiation" of infinite virtue for taking away the sins of the world, and restor-

ing lost man to an eternal union with his God. He has moreover enabled us to offer up the same sacrifice with him and in his name, to his Father, for the same ends as he did; thus to give infinite glory to God, and to procure infinite blessings for ourselves and all the world.

Consider, thirdly, that our loving Redeemer has appointed this same sacrifice to be perpetuated for ever in his church, in the holy mass; and to be offered daily for the like intentions on thousands of altars throughout the universe, as long as the world shall endure; himself in person invisibly officiating, both as priest and victim, the offerer and the offering. And can we desire any thing more to make us completely happy, than thus to possess the very source of all happiness!

Conclude never to be wanting in a due correspondence with all these graces and blessings, procured for us by the incarnation and death of the Son of God.

DECEMBER 21.

On St. Thomas the apostle.

CONSIDER, first, that God is wonderful in all his saints; but in none more than in the apostles. These he raised from the lowest and meanest condition in life; from the earth, and from the dunghill, to make them the princes of his people, pillars and foundations of his church, prodigies of his grace, and the ministers of salvation to an unbelieving world. What motives have we not, to praise and glorify God on their festivals, for all that he has done for them, and through their means, for us all! What encouragement to hope in that goodness, which thus delights to work the greatest wonders in favor of the *little* and the *humble*? And what lessons for our imitation, in their faithful correspondence with divine grace!

Consider, secondly, from the epistle of this day, (Eph. ii. 19.) the great advantages we have received through the ministry of the apostles, by our vocation to the true faith. For "now," says St. Paul, "you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God; built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building framed together groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord."

Consider, thirdly, that St. Thomas's slowness of belief with regard to the resurrection of our Lord, was succeeded by a lively faith and ardent love, which continued with him, ever growing and increasing; and carried him through all his apostolic labors amongst so many barbarous nations to which he is said

to have preached the gospel; till by a glorious martyrdom it bought him to his Lord, and united him eternally to him. O that we had some small share in this lively faith and ardent love! It would make *our* crosses light and easy, and bring *us* also to our Lord.

Conclude, to honor God in this saint, by imitating his virtues, as far as your circumstances and your weakness will permit.

DECEMBER 22.

On the Ember Week in advent.

CONSIDER, first, that fasting and prayer are continually recommended by the word of God, as most efficacious means of sanctification. The ember weeks at the four seasons of the year are in a special manner appointed by the church, from the earliest ages, to comply more frequently with these scripture duties. But besides our sanctification, she moreover by this practice wishes her children to draw down a blessing from God upon all their labors, and upon the fruits of the earth; and to thank him for past favors, as well as to implore forgiveness for their daily offences. These are certainly sufficient considerations to make this primitive practice dear to christians.

Consider, secondly, the enormity of the crimes daily and hourly committed among christians of all degrees and conditions; and how few there are in comparison who do not often fall into mortal sin, in one shape or another. It is then not only a duty of obedience to our spiritual mother the church,—but of charity to ourselves and neighbors, to join at these times in prayer and penance, in order to prevent the dismal visitations of divine justice, both public and private; and to “turn now to the Lord with our whole heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning,” (Joel ii.) Thus should we effectually appease the dreadful wrath of God.

Consider, thirdly, that the ember weeks are also set aside by the church for the conferring of holy orders, which by apostolical tradition and by the example of the apostles, ought to be accompanied with prayer and fasting. (Acts xiii. 2, 3. xiv. 22.) In effect, as there is nothing on which both the general good of the whole church, and the welfare of every soul in particular so much depends, as upon having saintly pastors; so nothing more justly demands our prayers and fasting, than the obtaining of God such pastors.

Conclude, to strive by more than ordinary devotion and penance at these holy times, to answer all the ends of institutions so ancient and so necessary. Our Catholic ancestors devoted

the last twelve days of advent to fasting, prayer and alms, and the confession of their sins—to prepare themselves for Christmas; as we learn from B. Egbert, archbishop of York above a thousand years ago, (*Dial. de Eccl. Inst.*) O how much have we degenerated from this ancient piety!

DECEMBER 23.

On the preparation for the birth of Christ.

CONSIDER, first, that God having ordained, and foretold long before, by his prophet Micheas, that his Son should be born in Bethlehem, was pleased to bring about his eternal decrees, in the manner following. The emperor Augustus through a motive of state policy ordered a general census to be taken of all his subjects; and, in obedience to this order, St. Joseph and the blessed Virgin repaired from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be there enrolled; being both of the royal stock of David. But when this Virgin Mother, with her spouse St. Joseph, after a winter's journey, arrived in the last stage of pregnancy, at Bethlehem, the town was full; and "there was no room for them" even in the inns. Be astonished, that the Lord of heaven and earth should thus submit at his very birth, to the want of all the common conveniences of life, and even of a house to cover his head!

Consider, secondly, that St. Joseph having sought in vain a lodging in the town, found at last an open stable or stall for beasts, exposed on all sides to the inclemency of the weather, with which for want of better accommodations their poverty was contented to put up. This was the palace which the divine Wisdom chose, for the birth of our great King. The manger which had served for the ox and the ass, was the royal bed of state, in which he was laid, upon his first appearance amongst us mortals. O how loudly does this astonishing humiliation of the Son of God condemn our pride, and recommend humility!

Consider, thirdly, that your dear Redeemer, who once was pleased to be born *for you*, now earnestly desires to be spiritually born *in you*. Ah! be not like those unhappy Bethlehemites, who would not admit him into their houses. If then you wish to lodge him within your breast, you must allow him the chief place in your heart and affections. For though he did not disdain the stable, nor the crib, the ox, nor the ass;—he will not endure a heart *divided*, or occupied with unclean affections.

Conclude to give up in affection all things else, in exchange for the happiness of having the Son of God spiritually born and abiding in your soul. No human felicity can be compared with this.

DECEMBER 24.

On the birth of Christ.

CONSIDER, first, that the time being now come, when the Son of God was to be born into this world,—in the silence of the night, and in the obscurity of a stable, the eternal Word by whom all things were made, was brought forth by the spotless Virgin Mother, and came to dwell amongst us. O let us join on this occasion with all the heavenly spirits; who, in the midst of this extreme poverty and humility of the new born King, descended from heaven to adore their Lord, and to sing their hymns of praise and glory; according to that of the apostle, (Heb. i. 6.) that “when God brought his first-born into the world, he said: Let all the angels of God adore him.”

Consider, secondly, that at the time of our Saviour's birth, “there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night watches over their flocks. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone around about them; and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the infant wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.”

Consider, thirdly, from those words of the angel to the shepherds: “I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour;”—what ought to be the subject of your joy at this holy time. A Saviour is born this day to you, who comes “to save his people from their sins;”—to deliver you from the power and tyranny of Satan, and from eternal damnation. This is indeed a just subject of true joy! Not like the joys of worldlings, which are either vain and foolish, or base and brutal; but a joy in the Lord, and in his goodness, which opens to us by this mystery the gate to joys that shall never end. O how lovely, how desirable is the joy of this blessed peace of God's *good-will* to men, which will abide with us, and make us happy, for eternity!

Conclude, with the shepherd, to go over in spirit this night to Bethlehem; and there, with all affection and sincere repentance, offer up your heart to your new-born King.

DECEMBER 25.

On Christmas-day.

CONSIDER, first, that the devotion of this holy time, and of this day in particular, calls us to the crib of Bethlehem, there to contemplate our infant Saviour, and to entertain our souls with him. Reflect who this is whom you here behold lying as a helpless infant, in this open stall; poor and humble in his very birth, meanly wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in this crib, between an ox and an ass! O, your faith will inform you, that under all these mean appearances here lies concealed the Lord of Glory! This infant, not yet one day old, is the eternal Son of the eternal God: this weak and helpless babe is *He* who by his almighty power created heaven and earth: this speechless child is God's own Word, who called all things out of nothing, and whom all things obey! O wonderful mystery, which has thus joined together the highest and the lowest; all that is great in heaven, with all that is little and contemptible upon earth, in the person of this infant God!

Consider, secondly, and study well the great lessons which the Son of God desires to teach you at his birth. Learn to be humble, by the contemplation of those astonishing humiliations which he here embraces for your sake: learn to be poor in spirit, by the consideration of his voluntary poverty; learn mortification and self-denial, by the view of his sufferings, all through his own choice. Learn of him to despise this cheating world, and all the allurements of its sensual pleasures, which *He* who is the wisdom of God despises and condemns in his very birth. Above all, mark well the infinite charity and love of God for you, and the infinite enormity of sin, by which we offend this infinite charity.

Consider, thirdly, that to entertain in a proper manner your new-born King and Saviour, you must make acts of a lively *faith* in this your infant God, and all his sacred truths which he concealed in this mystery of his incarnation and birth;—of all the wonders of his almighty power, wisdom and goodness; of a most firm *hope* and confidence in him; and of a most ardent *love* of him, in return for the love which he has manifested in his incarnation for us all. Ah! were we fully sensible of this love of our Redeemer for us, we should effectually learn both to hate our sins and to love our God.

Conclude, during the holy time of Christmas, to suffer no worldly entertainments to keep you out of the company of your dear Redeemer: but often wait upon him with proper meditations and affections. Thus you will obtain his blessing, and, if you persevere, will one day reap the benefit of your redemption in eternal bliss.

DECEMBER 26.

On St. Stephen.

CONSIDER, first, what a happiness it is to lay down one's life for divine love. This was an honor granted to St. Stephen; and with the advantage, above other martyrs, of being the first witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ in his blood, the first victim of charity, who by martyrdom returned his Saviour love for love, life for life! But, alas! how far are *we* from this perfection of charity, who are so unwilling to suffer even the smallest inconvenience for the sake of our heavenly lover! Ah, let us at least desire and pray for a share of that spirit of charity and love which animated the martyrs.

Consider, secondly, that besides the extraordinary commendations given in scripture to St. Stephen, it informs us (Acts v. 15.) that when he was hurried, for zealously preaching the gospel, before the council of the Jews, all present "saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel." His zeal and courage in so good a cause, while in the midst of his enemies, was rewarded with a heavenly vision, in which he saw "the glory of God, and the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God," (Acts vii. 55.) upon this, the Jews "casting him forth out of the city, stoned him, invoking the Lord and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord."

Consider, thirdly, that among the virtues of St. Stephen, none was more remarkable than his charity; and none more pressingly calls for our imitation. Charity has two branches; the love of God with our whole heart and soul, and the love of our neighbors as ourselves. The love of God is exercised, by endeavoring to promote in all things the divine honor, both by word and work; and the love of our neighbors, by endeavoring to promote their true and everlasting welfare, upon all occasions. Thus did St. Stephen act, loving God not in word only, but in truth and in effect; and he showed his sincere love for his neighbors by his zeal for the salvation of their souls, and his endeavors to bring them to Christ—though this his charity cost him his life.

Conclude to imitate the zeal of St. Stephen,—his love for his God,—his charity for his neighbors, both friends and enemies,—and his courage in the cause of truth. To this end implore his intercession.

DECEMBER 27.

On St. John the apostle.

CONSIDER, first, that St. John being called in his youth to follow our Lord Jesus, cheerfully left both his parents and all things else, for the sake of Christ. His purity of soul and body made him the special favorite of his Lord; who therefore suffered him to lean upon his sacred bosom at his last supper; and on the following day, when he was expiring upon the cross, he recommended his virgin mother to his care, in quality of her affectionate son.

Consider, secondly, the other extraordinary privileges of St. John. He was one of the chief of the apostles, and also an evangelist or writer of the gospel, (which none of the other apostles were, except St. Mathew) and among the four evangelists is compared to the eagle, which flies high and looks upon the sun with a steadfast eye; because he takes his first flight up to the eternal Word, by whom all things were made; and follows throughout his whole gospel the same sublime course, with his eye still fixed on this great sun of justice, and the immense light of his divinity. St. John was also a martyr, by "drinking of the chalice of his Lord" in a long course of suffering; and he was a prophet, as his revelations in the Apocalypse concerning the latter times, abundantly demonstrate.

Consider, thirdly, that the writings of St. John recommend nothing so much as charity and truth: charity, "because God is charity:" he is all love: "let us therefore love God," saith he, "because God first hath loved us." But *this*, saith he, "is the love of God;" this is the charity we owe him, "that we keep his commandments. And this commandment we have from God, that we love one another." With this charity he joins truth: "loving in truth, walking in truth, for the sake of the truth which abideth in us" for ever. Such was the spirit of the "beloved disciple."

Conclude, with your whole soul to embrace this *love* and *truth*, so much recommended by St. John, or rather, through him, by the Holy Ghost: they will conduct you to a blissful eternity.

DECEMBER 28.

On the holy innocents.

CONSIDER, first, that the Saviour of mankind was no sooner born, but he began to be persecuted by the children of this world. The wicked Herod seeks the life of this new-born

king, at whose birth, denounced to him by the wise men of the East, his jealous mind had taken the alarm; and he employs both craft and open violence to execute his impious design. By divine admonition our infant Saviour was conveyed into Egypt, out of the reach of the tyrant; and all his barbarity served only to render the birth of the Messiah more illustrious, and to spread its fame throughout the world. For "there is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord," (Prov. xxi. 30.)

Consider, secondly, that "Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry, (Matt. ii.) and sending killed all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under." These are the holy innocents, whose festival we celebrate this day, as happy martyrs, bearing testimony, not by their words, but by their blood, to the birth of the Son of God. These are the first flowers of the martyrs, cropt in the very bud by the impious persecutor of Christ.

Consider, thirdly, that purity, innocence and temporal afflictions, are by divine appointment the way to eternal happiness. and while "there was lamentation and great mourning in Bethlehem, of the mothers" of the holy innocents, there was in the mean time, great joy in heaven, for their happy transfiguration to a better region of eternal bliss. Thus when the world is sorrowful, heaven rejoices, because "the momentary sufferings" of this life, procure for the sufferers "an eternal weight of glory" in that blessed kingdom: whereas, they that are without sufferings, are in danger of never coming thither.

Conclude, to embrace whatever share of afflictions may be appointed you by divine providence, as means to advance you towards heaven. Had not the innocents been brought to God by suffering, they might have lived to have crucified their Lord, and with the rebroate Jews, have been eternally miserable.

DECEMBER 29.

On the gospel of the good shepherd, (John x.)

CONSIDER, first, that the Son of God in this gospel recommends himself to us, under the amiable character of the good shepherd and pastor of our souls. "I am the good shepherd," saith he, "and I know mine, and mine know me; as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep." O christians, how happy are we in such a shepherd; so great, so good, so loving, so careful of our true welfare! He is indeed "the good shepherd" who came down from heaven to seek the lost sheep, and having found it, joy-

fully took it upon his own shoulders to his heavenly fold, [Luke xv.]

Consider, secondly, that this divine shepherd has placed our souls in the rich pastures of his catholic church, and of his divine word and sacraments, where nothing shall be wanting to us, [Ps. xxii.] "He conducts us to the paths of justice; and when we are walking in the midst of the shadow of death, his rod and his staff still comfort and support us.—He hath prepared a table before us, against them that afflict us." At this heavenly table he feeds his sheep with his own most sacred body and blood. And in consequence of all these favors already conferred upon us, he encourages us to conclude with the royal prophet, that "his mercy will follow us all the days of our life," and even to a happy eternity.

Consider, thirdly, that "the sheep" of Christ "follow" their shepherd, "because they know his voice: but a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers.—My sheep," saith he, [John x.] "hear my voice: and I know them; and they follow me. And I give them eternal life; and they shall not perish for ever; and no man shall snatch them out of my hand." Christians, do we follow this our shepherd both by our faith and practice? Do we flee from strangers—the world, the flesh and the devil? If so, we are truly his sheep, and if we persevere shall receive of him eternal life.

Conclude, since nothing has been wanting on the part of your heavenly shepherd, faithfully to correspond on your side, with the character of a good sheep.

DECEMBER 30.

On the conclusion of the year.

CONSIDER, first, that all these twelve months just past, have flowed away into the gulph of eternity: they are now no more; nor will they ever return. All our years pass in like manner; they all pass on one after another, and hurry us along with them into an endless and unchangeable eternity. Let us then adhere to God alone who passes not with time, and is alone eternal. All temporary things, in comparison must be despised, if we wish to be prepared for our sudden departure hence.

Consider, secondly, that as the year is past and gone, so are all its pleasures and amusements, together with its pains and mortifications: their remembrance is like that of a dream. Why then are we not feelingly convinced of the emptiness and vanity of all human things; and that nothing deserves our love or notice but God and immortality? Ah! let us learn to see only

those evils which will have no end, and the evil of sin, which leads to endless misery.

Consider, thirdly, how you have spent your time this year. What virtue have you acquired? What vice have you subdued? What passions have you overcome? Have you made any improvement at all in virtue; or rather have you not gone backwards? Alas! what an account shall you have one day to give for the loss of all this precious time! With regard to your sins, whether of commission or omission,—against God, your neighbor or yourself, in thought, word or deed,—how dreadful will the scene appear upon a little examination; and how melancholy would be your lot, were it decided by the performances of this last year!

Conclude with hearty thanks to Almighty God for all his blessings of the past year, especially for his patience and forbearance with you in your sins. Offer him your heart and faithful service, for the remainder of your life.

DECEMBER 31.

On the gospel of girding the loins, (Luke xii.)

CONSIDER, first, those words of our Lord to his disciples, and to us all: "let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands; and be ye like to men who wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately." This spiritual "girding of our loins" consists in the constant restraint of our irregular inclinations and passions; and the "having lamps always burning in our hands" denotes the constant exercise of christian virtues, which must shine forth—to the glory of God and the edification of our neighbors. Happy indeed are those servants, who are always waiting in these dispositions, for the coming of their Lord!

Consider, secondly, the great reward of this their fidelity. "Amen I say to you, that their Lord will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat; and passing he will minister to them!" Oh! what incomprehensible joys are signified by these words, "passing he will minister to them!" At this divine table we are invited to sit down, to be for ever entertained by him with all the delights of heaven! And though we have already passed a great part of our life without the dispositions he requires, we must not be discouraged: for, "if he shall come in the second watch, or if he shall come in the third watch," and shall then find us watching, it will not be too late. "Blessed," saith he, "are those servants."

Consider, thirdly, that our Lord, who has lovingly borne with

us all this year, has in the mean time called away thousands of others, who this day twelve-month were as likely to live as ourselves. Their bodies are now corrupting in the grave : but oh ! where are their souls ? And where shall *our* bodies, where shall *our* souls be, a twelve-month hence ? Let us then be always ready ; “for at what hour we think not, the Son of man will come.”

Conclude, always to be prepared for the coming of your Judge ; and you will not fail of being ranked among those happy servants, who “shall enter into the eternal joy of their Lord.”

THE END.

I N D E X .

New Year's day,	7
On beginning a new life with the new year,	8
The rules of a new life,	8
What we must renounce by the christian's rule,	9
On the lives we are to lead by the christian's rule,	10
the Epiphany,	11
The wise men's journey to Bethlehem,	11
On the faith and offerings of the wise men,	12
the offerings we must make by the example of the wise men,	13
the gospel of the Sunday within the octave of the Epiphany,	14
seeking Jesus when he has been lost by sin,	15
What Jesus teaches in his private life,	16
On our Saviour's baptism by St. John the Baptist,	17
the sacred name of Jesus,	18
our Lord's changing water into wine,	19
the necessity of consideration,	20
the consideration of God,	21
the consideration of the law of God,	22
the consideration of ourselves,	23
our first beginning,	24
our last end,	24
the titles which God has to our service,	25
the happiness of serving God,	26
the vanity of worldly pursuits,	27
the conversion of St. Paul,	27
mortal sin,	28
the complicated guilt of each mortal sin,	29
the folly and presumption of the wilful sinner,	30
the dismal effects of sin,	31
the dreadful effects of sin in the soul of a christian,	32
the judgments of God upon mortal sin,	33
not slighting venial sin,	33
Candlemas day,	34
the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, (St. Matt. xx.)	35
the multitude of our sins,	36
the goodness of God in waiting for sinners,	37
turning from sin to God,	38
the sentiments of a penitential sinner,	39
doing penance for our sins,	40
the manner of doing penance for sin,	40
the parable of the sower, (Luke viii.)	41
Continuation of the parable of the sower,	42
Against delay of repentance,	43
On the folly of deferring our conversion,	44
death-bed repentance,	44
the dispositions with which we must enter upon the service of God,	45
true devotion,	46
the opposition of the world and the gospel,	47
fighting under the standard of Jesus Christ,	48
the rules prescribed by Jesus to his followers,	49
the gospel for the feast of St. Matthias,	50
St. Joseph,	50
the annunciation of the blessed Virgin,	51
Ash-Wednesday,	52
On fasting,	53
the rules of fasting,	54

On the great fast of a christian,	55
the fast of Lent,	55
The ends of the institution of Lent,	56
On the examination of the state of our interior,	57
a farther examination of the soul,	58
Other sins which require examination,	59
On exercising works of mercy,	60
the spiritual works of mercy,	60
prayer,	61
the necessity of prayer,	62
attention in prayer,	63
other conditions of prayer,	64
fervor in prayer,	65
mental prayer or meditation,	65
the practice of mental prayer,	66
devotion to the passion of Christ,	67
the great advantages of devotion to our Saviour's passion,	68
the lessons which Christ teaches us in his passion,	69
Other lessons to be learned from Christ in his passion,	70
On the love which Christ has shown us in his passion,	71
Other considerations to excite our love,	72
On our Lord's suffering before his passion,	73
our Saviour's prayer in the garden,	74
our Saviour's agony and sweat of blood,	75
the treason of Judas,	76
the apprehension of our Lord,	77
our Lord's appearance before Annas and Caiphas,	78
How our Lord was treated in the house of Caiphas,	79
Peter's denial,	80
Our Lord is led to Pilate,	81
Lord is sent from Pilate to Herod,	82
Barabbas is preferred before our Lord: He is scourged at the pillar,	83
Our Lord is crowned with thorns,	83
Lord is shown to the people,	84
On the part the blessed Virgin bore in her Son's sufferings,	85
Our Lord is condemned to the cross,	86
Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem,	87
Saviour carries his cross,	88
Saviour is nailed to the cross,	89
On the sufferings of our Saviour upon the cross,	90
our Saviour's preaching from the cross,	91
our Saviour's death upon the cross,	92
our Saviour's burial,	93
the resurrection of our Lord,	94
What we are to learn from the resurrection of Christ,	95
Our Lord appears to his disciples after his resurrection,	96
Lord appears to the disciples going to Emmaus, (Luke xxiv. 11.)	97
Our Lord's manifestation to all the apostles, (Luke xxiv. John xx.)	98
On the peace of a christian,	99
perseverance in good,	100
the sacrament of baptism,	100
the covenant of baptism,	101
the ceremonies of baptism,	102
the evil of falling from the grace of baptism,	103
the theological virtues,	104
faith,	104
the grounds of faith,	106
a lively faith,	107
divine hope,	108
joining self-diffidence with confidence in God,	108
the Lord's prayer,	109
Hallowed be thy name,	110
Thy kingdom come,	111
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,	111
Give us this day our daily bread,	112
Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us,	113
Lead us not into temptation,	114
Deliver us from evil,	114
On morning prayer,	115

On evening prayer,	116
praying always,	117
the great commandment of divine love,	117
loving the Lord our God above all things,	118
loving God with our whole heart,	119
loving God with our whole soul,	120
loving God with our whole mind,	121
loving God with our whole strength,	121
returning love for love,	122
the devotion of the time,	123
the means of attaining to the love of God,	124
acts of divine love,	125
other exercises of the love of God,	126
the ascension of our Lord,	126
the lessons to be learned from the ascension of our Lord,	127
Other lessons to be learned from the ascension of our Lord,	128
On the precept of charity to our neighbor,	129
the excellence of fraternal charity,	130
the exercise of fraternal charity,	130
the different branches of fraternal charity,	131
the great pattern of charity,	132
St. George,	133
SS. Philip and James,	133
the finding of the cross,	134
preparing the soul for the Holy Ghost,	135
the dispositions necessary for receiving the Holy Ghost,	136
the coming down of the Holy Ghost,	137
the happiness of having the Holy Ghost in the soul,	138
the gifts of the Holy Ghost,	139
the means of keeping the Holy Ghost in the soul,	140
the marks of the presence of the Holy Ghost,	141
the sacrament of confirmation,	142
the obligations of our confirmation,	142
the blessed Trinity,	143
the figures of the blessed Eucharist,	144
the manna and the bread of Elias,	145
other figures of the blessed Eucharist,	146
the institution of the blessed Eucharist,	147
the mysteries contained in the blessed Eucharist,	148
Of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist,	149
On Christ's inviting us to his heavenly banquet,	150
the excellent fruits of this divine banquet,	150
the dispositions required to receive worthily,	151
devotion before communion,	152
devotion after communion,	152
Of the blessed Eucharist as it is a sacrifice,	153
On the excellence of the Eucharistic sacrifice,	154
the blessed Eucharist as it is a sacrifice of adoration and praise,	155
the Eucharist as it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving,	156
the blessed Eucharist, as it is a sacrifice of propitiation,	157
the blessed Eucharist as it is a sacrifice of prayer and supplication,	157
devotion towards the holy sacrifice,	158
a spiritual communion,	159
the sacrament of penance,	160
the confession of our sins,	161
the nativity of St. John the Baptist,	162
the lessons taught us by the Baptist,	163
preparation for confession,	163
motives of repentance,	164
Other motives of contrition,	165
On St. Peter and St. Paul,	166
sincerity in confession,	167
time and eternity,	168
the visitation of the blessed Virgin,	169
the good employment of time,	170
remembering our last things,	170
the certainty of death,	171
the time and manner of our death,	172
preparing for death,	173

On the sentiments of the soul at the hour of death,	173
the death of the just man,	174
the death of the wicked,	175
the condition of the body after death,	175
the soul's first entrance into another world,	176
the particular judgment after death.	177
the different states of departed souls before the last day,	177
the souls detained in purgatory after death,	178
the sufferings of souls in the middle state,	179
the great accounting day,	180
the separation of the good and the bad,	180
the thoughts of the wicked upon this dreadful separation,	181
the opening of the books of conscience,	182
the manifestation of conscience at the last day,	183
St. Mary Magdalene, (Luke vii.)	184
the last sentence of the good,	184
the last sentence of the wicked,	185
St. James,	186
St. Ann,	187
Hell,	188
Other considerations on hell,	189
On the prison of hell,	189
the entertainments of hell,	190
the fire of hell,	191
the pain of loss in hell,	191
the worm of hell,	192
a miserable eternity,	193
the happiness of heaven,	193
the good things of our Lord,	194
the transfiguration of our Lord, (Matt. xvii.)	195
the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem,	196
the happy society of the blessed in heaven,	196
the eternal enjoyment of God,	197
St. Laurence,	198
the endowments of bodies glorified,	199
a happy eternity,	199
conformity with the will of God,	200
Motives of conformity with the will of God,	201
On the assumption of the blessed Virgin,	201
the gospel for the assumption, (Luke x.)	202
resignation to the will of God in our sufferings,	203
self-denial,	204
the mortification of the interior,	205
the mortification of the passions,	206
mortifying our predominant passion,	206
mortifying the sensual appetite,	207
mortifying our curiosity,	208
the gospel of St. Bartholomew, (Luke vi.)	209
humility,	210
the school of humility,	210
Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, (Matt. xi. 29.)	211
On the fruits of humility,	212
the other advantages of humility,	213
the degrees of humility,	213
the practice of humility,	214
the eight beatitudes, (Matt. v.)	215
poverty of spirit,	216
meekness,	216
mourning,	217
hungering and thirsting after justice,	218
being merciful,	218
cleanness of heart,	219
the nativity of the blessed Virgin,	220
being peace-makers,	221
the means of preserving internal peace,	222
suffering persecution for justice sake,	222
patience,	223
the means of acquiring patience,	224
the exaltation of the cross,	225

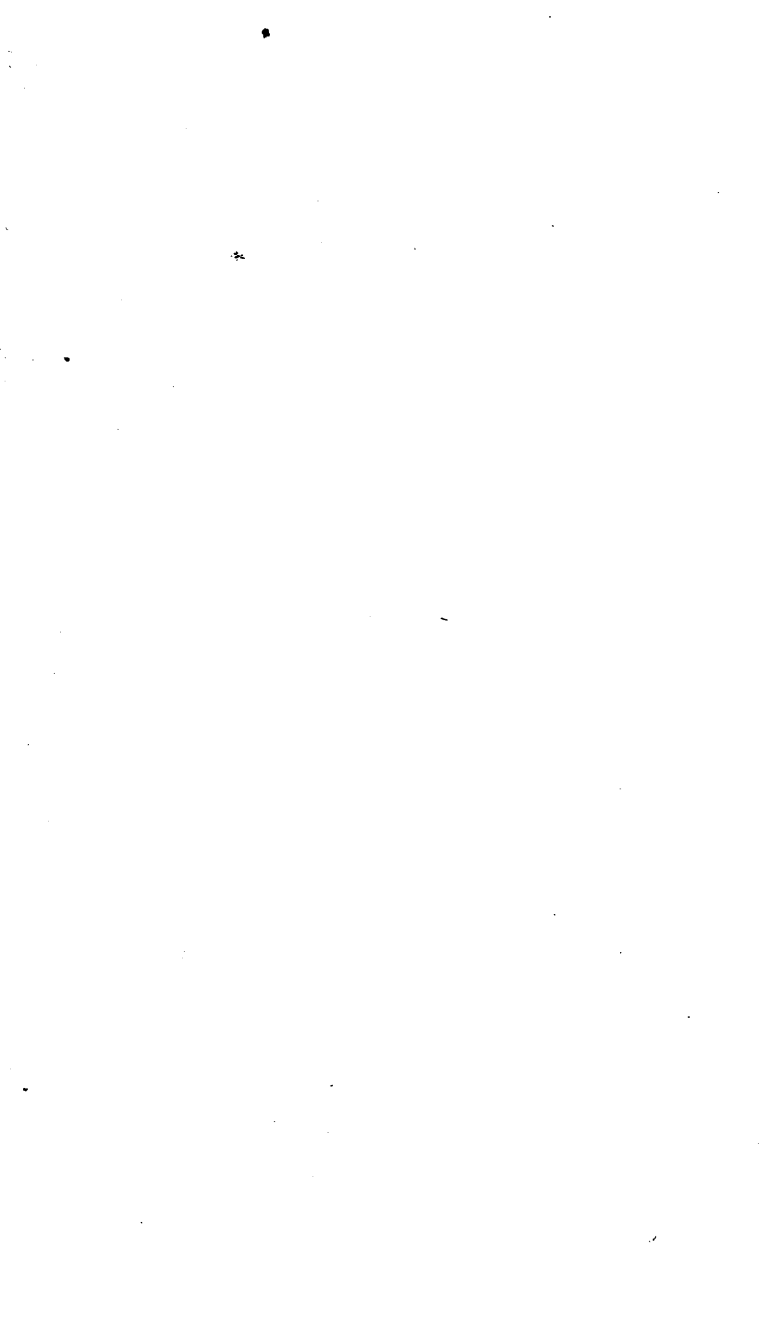
On the presence of God,	225
the exercise of the presence of God,	226
the fruits of attention to the presence of God,	227
the virtues of obedience,	228
the fruits of obedience,	229
keeping the commandments,	229
St. Matthew,	230
The divine worship enjoined by the first commandment,	231
On the prohibition of idol-worship,	232
honoring the holy name of God,	233
keeping holy the Lord's day,	234
Honor thy father and thy mother,	235
Thou shalt not kill,	237
On spiritual murder,	237
Michaelmas-day,	237
Thou shalt not commit adultery,	238
Thou shalt not steal,	239
On our guardian Angels,	240
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor,	241
On rash judgment,	242
avoiding all lies,	242
Thou shalt not covet, &c.,	243
On the precepts of the church,	244
the vice of pride,	245
the malignity of pride,	246
Remedies against pride,	247
Other prescriptions against pride,	248
On vain glory,	249
Prescriptions against vain glory,	250
On covetousness,	250
Prescriptions against covetousness,	251
On the vice of impurity,	252
Prescriptions against impurity,	253
On the virtue of chastity,	254
the vice of anger,	254
Remedies against the vice of anger,	255
On the vice of intemperance,	256
Prescriptions against intemperance,	257
On the vice of envy,	258
Remedies against envy,	259
On the vice of spiritual sloth,	259
Remedies against spiritual sloth,	260
On the christian's warfare,	261
St. Simon and St. Jude,	262
the christian's armour,	263
the christian's conflict,	264
the four cardinal virtues,	264
the feast of all the saints,	265
the commemoration of all souls,	266
the obligations of all christians to be saints,	267
the means we all have to become saints,	268
the perfection of our ordinary actions,	269
the sanctity of the christian's institute,	270
following the light of Christ,	271
One thing is necessary, (Luke x. 42.)	271
Strive to enter by the narrow gate, (Luke xiii. 24.)	272
No man can serve two masters, (Matt. vi. 24.)	273
He that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple, (Luke xiv. 33.)	274
If any man will come after me let him deny himself, (Matt. xvi. 24.)	275
Except your justice exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, (Matt. v. 20.)	275
The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure, (Matt. xiii. 44.)	276
On the marriage feast, (Matt. xxii.)	277
The parable of the barren fig tree, (Luke xiii.)	278
On the parable of the prodigal Son, (Luke xv.)	279
The parable of the unjust Steward, (Luke xvi.)	280
The rich man and the poor beggar, (Luke xvi.)	281

cOn the haritable Samaritan, (Luke x.)	- 282
the presentation of the blessed Virgin,	- 283
The Pharisee and the Publican, (Luke xviii.)	- 283
The grain of mustard seed, (Matt. xiii. 31.)	- 284
On the parable of the ten virgins; (Matt. xxv.)	- 285
the parable of the talents, (Matt. xxv.)	- 286
the parable of the vineyard, (Matt. xxi. 33.)	- 287
our Lord's merciful conduct towards sinners,	- 288
the conversion of Zacheus,	- 389
Christ weeping over Jerusalem, (Luke xix.)	- 289
On St. Andrew,	- 290
the time of advent,	- 291
How to prepare the way of the Lord,	- 292
On the miracles of Christ our Lord,	- 393
Our Lord cleanses the lepers,	- 294
Our Lord stills the storm and feeds the multitude,	- 295
On other miracles of our Lord,	- 296
Our Lord cures the blind, and raises the dead to life,	- 297
The conception of the blessed Virgin,	- 298
How we must prepare ourselves for Christ,	- 298
On purifying the interior powers of the soul,	- 299
On the purity of our actions,	- 300
On the angelical salutation,	- 301
The wonders of God, in the incarnation of his Son,	- 302
On the glory of God, in the incarnation of his Son,	- 302
On the glory which the Son of God, from the first instant of his conception,	- 303
gave to his Father,	- 304
The charity of our Lord towards us from his first conception,	- 305
On benefits derived to us through the incarnation,	- 306
Other benefits of our redemption,	- 307
On our Saviour as our king, and our priest,	- 308
our Saviour as our sacrifice,	- 309
St. Thomas the apostle,	- 310
the Ember Week in advent,	- 311
the preparation for the birth of Christ,	- 312
the birth of Christ,	- 313
Christmas-day,	- 314
St. Stephen,	- 315
St. John the apostle,	- 315
the holy innocents,	- 316
the gospel of the good shepherd, (John x.)	- 317
the conclusion of the year,	- 318
the gospel of girding the loins, (Luke xii.)	- 318

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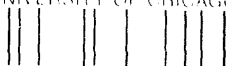
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